



THE "CHANDOS CLASSICS."

THE  
BOOK OF AUTHORS

A COLLECTION OF  
CRITICISMS, ANA, MÔTS, PERSONAL DESCRIPTIONS,  
ETC., ETC., ETC.

WHOLLY REFERRING TO  
ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS IN EVERY AGE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,

BY  
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LONDON AND NEW YORK:  
FREDRICK WARNE AND CO.





## PREFACE.

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THE design of this collection is to present to the reader specimens of some of the smart and piquant things that have been said by literary men and women of one another. The collection, as the title sets forth, is wholly restricted to English literature.

Among English writers will be found names more generally associated with painting, music, the senate, and the stage. These names, as in the case of Hogarth, Reynolds, Burke, Macklin, Foote, and others, have been admitted without reference to vocation.

Of Divines not many have been included. The most familiar names in English Church History are eminent rather by their acts and by the example of their lives than by their writings. A few American authors have been inserted. Room would have been found for more could more criticisms have been collected.

There are many recent and living authors to whose names I should have been glad to have subjoined more criticisms than will be found. There are also many recent and living authors whose names I have with great reluctance omitted from simple inability to procure requisite testimonies. Anonymous criticism I could have procured in abundance ; but anonymous criticisms I have, with few exceptions, rejected. Of the periodicals I have

quoted, the earlier numbers have been selected in preference to the later, for reasons immediately obvious, when the lists of their original contributors are examined.

Let me express the desire that in no case will the standard of merit suggested by this book be estimated by the space allotted to the criticisms on each author. Choice has been regulated not by the will but by the materials.

When unfamiliar authors have been quoted I have had regard to the good things their bad or middling productions have provoked from clever men. It must be remembered that Shadwell suggested "Macflecknoe," and that to Theobald we probably owe the "Dunciad." I may also add that the criticisms of middling writers have been quoted only when the writings of the authors under discussion have been neglected by those whose opinions would be worth adducing.

Whenever I have been embarrassed by a multitude of testimonies I have preferred the remarks of contemporaries. I have endeavoured, so far as I found possible, to make this work in its selections representative. Although many names in this volume will be found new to the general reader, he may believe that of their age they were really among the representative writers in whose productions will be found the literary character of their times.<sup>1</sup>

# THE BOOK OF AUTHORS.

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Roger Bacon.

1214-1292.

THE resemblance between Roger Bacon and his great namesake is very remarkable. Whether Lord Bacon ever read the "Opus Majus" I know not, but it is singular that his favourite quaint expression, *prærogative* scientiarum, should be found in that work, though not used with the same allusion to the Roman Comitia. And whoever reads the sixth part of the "Opus Majus" upon experimental science, must be struck by it as the prototype in spirit of the "Novum Organum."—*Hallam*.

Our great Roger Bacon, by a degree of penetration which perhaps has never been equalled, discovered some of the most occult secrets in Nature. She seems indeed—if I may so express myself—to have stood naked before him. His honours have been stolen from him by more modern authors, who have appeared inventors when they were copying Bacon. Yet, for the reward of all his intense studies, the holy brethren and the infallible majesty of Rome occasioned him to languish in prison during the greater part of his life.—*I. D'Israeli*.

His are wonderful discoveries for a man to make in so ignorant an age, who had no master to teach him, but struck it all out of his own brain; but it is still more wonderful that such discoveries should be so long concealed; till in the next succeeding centuries other people should start up and lay claim to those very inventions to which Bacon alone had a right.—*Dr. Friend*.

Bacon discovered the art of making reading-glasses, the camera obscura, microscopes, telescopes, and various other

mathematical and astronomical instruments. He discovered a method of performing all the chymical operations that are now in use. He combined the mechanical powers in so wonderful a manner, that it was for this he was accused of magic. His discoveries in medicine were by no means unimportant. That the ingredients of gunpowder and the art of making it were well known to him is now undeniable; but the *humane philosopher*, dreading the consequences of communicating this discovery to the world, transposed the letters of the Latin words which signify charcoal, which made the whole obscure.—*Henry*.

## John Gower.

1320–1402.

Gower stamped with the force of ethical reasoning his smooth rhymes; and this was a near approach to poetry itself. If in the mind of Chaucer we are more sensible of the impulses of genius—those creative and fugitive touches—his diction is more mixed and unsettled than the tranquil elegance of Gower.—*J. D'Israeli*.

The almost worthless Gower.—*Coleridge*.

He is always polished, sensible, perspicuous, and not prosaic in the reproachful sense of the word.—*Hallam*.

He was a man of varied learning, but far inferior to Chaucer in the natural qualities of a true poet.—*Scrymgeour*.

If Chaucer had not existed the compositions of John Gower, the next poet in succession, would alone have been sufficient to have rescued the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II. from the imputations of barbarism.—*Warton*.

The first of our authors who can properly be said to have written English was Sir John Gower, who in his "Confession of a Lover" calls Chaucer his disciple, and may therefore be considered as the father of our poetry.—*Johnson*.

The "moral Gower" was Chaucer's friend, and inherited his tediousness and pedantry, without a sparkle of his fancy, passion, humour, wisdom, and good spirits.—*Alexander Smith*.

## Geoffrey Chaucer.

1328-1400.

In all his works he excelleth, in mine opinion, all other writers in our English, for he writeth in void words, but all his matter is full of high and quick sentence, to whom ought to be given laud and praise for his noble making and writing.—*Caxton*.

Redith his werkis ful of plesaunce,  
 Clere in sentence, in langage excellent,  
 Briefly to wryte suche was his suffysaunce,  
 What ever to saye he tooke in his entente  
 His langage was so fayr and pertynente  
 It semeth unto mannys heerynge  
 Not only the worde but verely the thyng.—*Ibid*.

As he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer or the Romans Virgil; he is a perpetual fountain of good sense, learned in all sciences, and therefore speaks properly on all subjects.—*Dryden*.

Chaucer followed Nature everywhere, but was never so bold as to go beyond her.—*Ibid*.

Chaucer, notwithstanding the praises bestowed on him, I think obscene and contemptible; he owes his celebrity merely to his antiquity, which he does not deserve so well as Pierce Plowman or Thomas of Ercildoune.—*Byron*.

They who look into Chaucer . . will find his comic vein, like that of Shakspeare, to be only like one of mercury imperceptibly mingled with a mine of gold.—*Warton*.

Chaucer his sense can only boast,  
 The glory of his numbers lost!  
 Years have defac'd his matchless strain,  
 And yet he did not sing in vain.—*Waller*.

Him who first with harmony inform'd  
 The language of our fathers.—*Akenside*.

The affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.—*Wordsworth*.

See how Chaucer exhibits to us all that lay around him, the

roughness and ignorance, the honour, faith, fancy, joyousness of a strong mind and a strong age, both tranquil within bounds which, as large enough for their uses, neither had tried to pass. How strikingly for us are those grating contrasts of social condition harmonized by the home-bred feeling that men as they then were had the liberty and space they then needed: the king and priest the all-sufficient guides of men's higher life, and all powers and even wishes finding ample room, each within the range marked out by custom! Every figure is struck off by as clear and cutting a stroke as that of a practised mower with his scythe.—*Quarterly Review*.

In serious and moral poetry he is frequently languid and diffuse; but he springs like Antæus from the earth, when his subject changes to coarse satire or merry narrative.—*Hallam*.

His words point as an index to the objects like the eye or finger. There were none of the commonplaces of poetic diction in our author's time; no reflected lights of fancy; no borrowed roseate tints; he was obliged to inspect things for himself: to look narrowly: almost to handle the object. Chaucer had an equal eye for truth of nature and discrimination of character; and his interest in what he saw gave new distinctness and force to what he did.—*Hazlitt*.

Chaucer seems to have been a right Wicklevian, or else there never was any; and that, all his works almost, if they be thoroughly advised, will testify (albeit it be done in mirth and covertly), and especially the latter end of his third book of the Testament of love; for there purely he toucheth the highest matter, that is, the Communion; wherein, except a man be altogether blind, he may espy him at the full.—*John Fox*.

The first of our versifiers who wrote poetically. He does not, however, appear to have deserved all the praise he has received, or all the censure that he has suffered. Skinner blames him in harsh terms for having vitiated his native speech by whole cartloads of foreign words. But he that reads the works of Gower will find smooth numbers and easy rhymes, of which Chaucer is supposed to be the inventor, and the French words, whether good or bad, of which Chaucer is charged as the importer.—*Johnson*.

For a hundred beautiful pictures of genuine English existence and English character, for a world of persons and things that have snatched us from the present to their society, for a host of wise and experience-fraught maxims, for many a tear shed

and emotion revived, and laugh of merriment, for many a happy hour and bright remembrance, we thank thee, Dan Chaucer, and just thanks shalt thou receive a thousand years hence.—*W. Howitt.*

## William Langland.

14th century.

He is a great satirist, touching with caustic invective or keen irony public abuses and private vices, but in the depth of his emotions and wildness of imagination he breaks forth in the solemn tones and in the sombre majesty of Dante.—*I. D'Israeli.*

The first English writer who can be read with approbation is William Langland, the author of "*Piers Plowman's Vision*," a severe satire upon the clergy. Though his measure is more uncouth than that of his predecessors, there is real energy in his conceptions, which he caught, not from the chimeras of knight-errantry, but the actual manners and opinions of his times.—*Hallam.*

## John Skelton.

1460–1529.

His eccentricity in attempts at humour is at once vulgar and flippant; and his style is almost a texture of slang phrases patched with shreds of French and Latin.—*Thomas Campbell.*

Beastly Skelton.—*Pope.*

His buffooneries, like those of Rabelais, were thrown out as a tub to the whale; for unless Skelton had written thus for the coarsest palates, he could not have poured forth his bitter and undaunted satire in such perilous times.—*Southey.*

Skelton is the father of English doggerel.—*Quarterly Review.*

Skelton's characteristic vein of humour is capricious and grotesque. If his whimsical extravagancies ever move our laughter, at the same time they shock our sensibility. His festive levities are not only vulgar and indelicate, but frequently want truth and propriety. His subjects are often as ridiculous as his metre; but he sometimes debases his matter by his versification. On the whole, his genius seems better suited to low burlesque than to liberal and manly satire. It is supposed by



Caxton that he improved our language; but he sometimes affects obscurity, and sometimes adopts the most familiar phraseology of the common people.—*Warton.*

He was a rude, rayling rimer, and all his doings ridiculous.—*Puttenham.*

## William Dunbar.

1465-1535.

The greatest poet that Scotland has produced.—*Ellis.*

Dunbar has been too little known. His works remained, till a comparatively recent period, buried in manuscript. He is a varied and powerful writer; great alike in descriptive, didactic, and humorous poetry; and rich in the knowledge of men and life.—*Scrymegeour.*

The first thing that strikes the reader of these (Dunbar's) poems is their variety and intellectual range. It may be said that—partly from constitutional turn of thought, partly from the chaotic and turbulent time in which he lived, when families rose to splendour and as suddenly collapsed; when the steed that bore his rider to the hunting-field in the morning returned at evening masterless to the garden-gate—Dunbar's prevailing mood of mind is melancholy: that he, with a certain fondness for the subject, as if it gave him actual relief, moralized over the sandy foundations of moral prosperity, the advance of age putting out the light of youth, and cancelling the rapture of the lover, and the certainty of death. This is a favourite part of contemplation with him, and he pursues it with a gloomy sedateness of acquiescence which is more affecting than if he raved and foamed against the inevitable. But he has the mobility of the poetic nature, and the sad ground-tone is often drowned in the ecstasy of lighter notes.—*Alexander Smith.*

## Sir Thomas More.

1480-1535.

He was a man of rare virtues and excellent parts. In his youth he had freer thoughts of things, as appears by his "Utopia" and his "Letters to Erasmus;" but afterwards he became superstitiously devoted to the interests and passions of the popular

clergy; and as he served them when he was in authority, even to assist them in all their cruelties, so he employed his pen in the same cause, both in writing against all the new opinions in general, and in particular against Tindal, Frith, and Barnes. More was no divine at all; and it is plain to any that read his writings that he knew nothing of antiquity beyond the quotations he found in the common law and in the Master of the Sentences (only he had read some of St. Austin's treatises).—*Burnet.*

For justice, contempt of money, humility, and a true generosity of mind, he was an example to the age in which he lived.—*Ibid.*

This great and learned man was famous for enlivening his ordinary discourses with wit and pleasantry; and as Erasmus tells him in an Epistle Dedicatory, acted in all parts of life like a second Democritus. He died upon a point of religion, and is respected as a martyr by that side for which he suffered.—*Addison.*

Sir Thomas More's character, both in public and private, comes as near to perfection as our nature will permit; and I must think that in weighing it there has been too much concession on the score that the splendour of his great qualities was obscured by intolerance and superstition; and that he voluntarily sought his death by violating a law which with a safe conscience he might have obeyed. We Protestants must lament that he was not a convert to the doctrines of the Reformation.—*Lord Campbell.*

With all my Protestant zeal I must feel a higher reverence for Sir Thomas More than Thomas Cromwell or Cranmer.—*Ibid.*

When we reflect that Sir Thomas More was ready to die for the doctrine of Transubstantiation, we cannot but feel some doubt whether the doctrine of Transubstantiation may not triumph over all opposition. More was a man of eminent talents. He had all the information of the subject that we have, or that while the world lasts any human being will have. The text "This is my body" was in his New Testament as it is in ours. The absurdity of the literal interpretation was as great and as obvious in the sixteenth century as it is now. No progress that science has made, or will make, can add to what seems to us the overwhelming force of the argument against the Real Presence. We are therefore unable to understand why

what Sir Thomas More believed respecting Transubstantiation may not be believed to the end of time by men equal in abilities and honesty to Sir Thomas More. But Sir Thomas More is one of the choice specimens of human wisdom and virtue; and the doctrine of Transubstantiation is a kind of proof charge. A faith that stands that test will stand any test.—*Macaulay*.

It appears from Ben Jonson that his Works were considered as models of pure and elegant style.—*Johnson*.

There was but one wit in England, and that was young Thomas More.—*Collet*.

*Crom.* Sir Thomas More is chosen

Lord Chancellor in your place.

*Wols.* That's somewhat sudden;

But he's a learned man. May he continue  
Long in his Highness's favour, and do justice  
For truth's sake, and his conscience.<sup>1</sup>—*Shakspeare*.

When More some time had Chancellor been,

No *more* suits did remain :

The same shall never *more* be seen

Till MORE be there again.—*Old Prophecy*.

He was of a middle stature, well proportioned, of a pale complexion; his hair of chestnut colour, his eyes grey, his countenance mild and cheerful; his voice not very musical, but clear and distinct; his constitution, which was good originally, was never impaired by his way of living, otherwise than by too much study. His diet was simple and abstemious, never drinking any wine but when he pledged those who drank to him; and rather mortifying than indulging his appetite in what he ate.—*More*.

Sir Thomas More set out as a philosopher and reformer; but the coarseness, turbulence, and bloody contests of Lutheranism having frightened him, this most upright and merciful man became a persecutor of men as innocent, though not of such great minds, as himself. He predicted that the Reformation would produce universal vice, ignorance, and barbarism. The events of a few years seemed to countenance his prophecy, but those of three centuries have belied it. His character is a most important example of the best man espousing the worst

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<sup>1</sup> Wolsey really said "that he was the fittest man to be his successor."—*Ed.*

cause, and supporting it even by bad actions—which is the greatest lesson of charity that can be taught.—*Sir James Mackintosh.*

One of the marvels of More was his infinite variety. He could write epigrams in a hair shirt at the Carthusian convent ; and pass from translating *Lucian* to lecturing on *Augustine* in the church of St. Lawrence. Devout almost to superstition, he was lighthearted almost to buffoonery. One hour we see him encouraging Erasmus in his love of Greek and the new learning, or charming with his ready wit the supper-tables of the Court, or turning a debate in Parliament ; the next at home, surrounded by friends and familiar servants, by wife and children, and children's children, dwelling among them in an atmosphere of love and music, prayers and irony—throwing the rein, as it were, on the neck of his most careless fancies, and condescending to follow out the humours of his monkey and the fool. His fortune was almost as various. From his utter indifference to show and money, he must have been a strange successor to Wolsey. He had thought as little about fame as Shakspeare ; yet in the next generation it was an honour to an Englishman throughout Europe to be the countryman of More.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1846.

He was a learned, wise, and exceeding good man ; extremely bigoted to the errors of Popery, which first made him the persecutor of the Protestants, and in the end cost him his life. Excepting in this instance, his character was almost faultless. He had every accomplishment of his time and every virtue of humanity. He had a passionate love for learning and learned men. His own writings are esteemed the most elegant and masterly of any of that age. The liveliness of his wit and his zeal for Popery caused him to treat the persons he wrote against with more acrimony than was natural to his temper. But his controversial pieces, which are large and numerous (for he was the chief person who appeared in that controversy), are to be admired even at this day for their good sense, the plausibility of his argumentation, the sprightliness of his fancy, and the elegance of his raillery. If truth had not lain so evidently as it did on the side of Protestantism, such an adversary, in its first appearance, must have given considerable check to it.—*Bishop Hurd.*

## Archbishop Cranmer.

1489-1556.

He was a man raised of God for great services, and well fitted for them. He was naturally of a mild and gentle temper, not soon heated, nor apt to give his opinion rashly of things or persons; and yet his gentleness, tho' it oft exposed him to his enemies, who took advantages from it to use him ill, knowing he would readily forgive them, did not lead him into such a weakness of spirit as to consent to everything that was uppermost. . . . He was a man of great candour; he never dissembled his opinion, nor disowned his friends.—*Burnet*.

If we weigh the character of this prelate in an equal balance he will appear far indeed removed from the turpitude imputed to him by his enemies, yet not entitled to any extraordinary veneration.—*Hallam*.

If we consider Cranmer merely as a statesman he will not appear a much worse man than Wolsey, Gardiner, Cromwell, or Somerset. But when an attempt is made to set him up as a saint it is scarcely possible for any man of sense who knows the history of the times to preserve his gravity.—*Macaulay*, "*Essays*."

He was at once a divine and a statesman. In his character of divine he was perfectly ready to go as far in the way of change as any Swiss or Scottish reformer. In his character of statesman he was desirous to preserve that organization which had, during many ages, admirably served the purposes of the bishops of Rome, and might be expected now to serve equally well the purposes of the English kings, and of their ministers. His temper and his understanding eminently fitted him to act as a mediator. Saintly in his professions, unscrupulous in his dealings, zealous for nothing, bold in speculation, a coward and a time-server in action, a placable enemy and a lukewarm friend, he was in every way qualified to arrange the terms of the coalition between the religious and the worldly enemies of Popery.—*Macaulay's "History of England."*

He was undoubtedly a man of merit, possessed of learning and capacity, and adorned with candour, sincerity, and beneficence, and all those virtues which were fitted to render him useful and amiable in society. His moral qualities procured him universal respect; and the courage of his martyrdom,

though he fell short of the right inflexibility observed in many, made him the hero of the Protestant party.—*Hume*.

An unquestionably learned, humane, charitable, and pious man. His nature was singularly frank and open. His zeal for pure religion as delivered in the Gospel was ardent; yet he was too fearful and compliant in some things against his own better judgment. Perhaps the sense of great obligations to Henry, as well as the resolute, vindictive temper of that prince, was sometimes a snare to him. He was by temper mild and moderate, sincere and constant in his friendships, and a great favourer of learning and learned men. It is no wonder his notions of Christian liberty were in those times imperfect, which made him, against the natural bent of his mind, in some few instances a persecutor. It is but of late we have understood the doctrine of toleration in its full extent. His greatest failing was his recantation at Oxford, the effect of a natural constitutional timidity, which yet he repaired as well as he could by giving the sincerest marks of repentance. On the whole, he lived in trying times, and was, with the exception of a few faults, an eminently great and good man.—*Bishop Hurd*.

## Sir David Lindsay.

1490–1557.

He was esteemed one of the first poets of the age, and his writings had contributed greatly to the advancement of the Reformation. Notwithstanding the indelicacy which disfigures several of his poetical productions, the personal deportment of Lindsay was grave; his morals were correct; and his writings discover a strong desire to reform the manners of the age, as well as ample proofs of true poetical genius, extensive learning, and wit the most keen and penetrating. He had long lashed the vices of the clergy, and exposed the absurdities and superstitions of Popery, in the most popular and poignant satires, being protected by James V., who retained a strong attachment to the companion of his early sports and the poet who had often amused his leisure hours.—*Dr. Thomas M'Crie*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Of early satirists Lindsay seems to have been the most efficacious. That the Reformation in Scotland was accelerated by the influence of his compositions is certain. His poems, we are told, were read by "every man,

Lyndsay had prepared the ground and John Knox\* only sowed the seed.—*Pinkerton*.

The name of Lindsay has been cherished by the Scottish people with peculiar affection. His language is their vernacular dialect, patent to all their associations and familiar feelings. His themes, while they embrace subjects of interest to all humanity, have still an aim peculiarly and immediately Scottish. Few of his pieces boast many of the charms which we associate with the term "poetry;" but graphicness of painting, pungency of sarcasm, and depth of wisdom and reflection are qualities which secure to Lindsay perpetual admiration.—*D. Scrymgeour*.

### Roger Ascham.

1505-1568.

The first book which can be worth naming at all is Ascham's "Schoolmaster," published in 1570, and probably written some years before. Ascham is plain and strong in his style, but

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woman, and child." An anecdote illustrative of this influence (recorded by a Scotch biographer of John Knox) is worth repeating:—

"Some time between 1550 and 1558 a friar was preaching at Perth in the church where the scholars of Andrew Simson attended public worship. In the course of his sermon, after relating some of the miracles wrought at the shrine of the saints, he began to inveigh bitterly against the Lutheran preachers, who were going about the country and endeavouring to withdraw the people from the Catholic faith. When he was in the midst of his invective a loud hissing arose in that part of the church where the boys, to the number of three hundred, were seated, so that the friar, abashed and affrighted, broke off his discourse and fled from the pulpit. A complaint having been made to the master, he instituted an inquiry into the cause of the disturbance, and to his astonishment found that it originated with the son of a craftsman in the town, who had a copy of Lindsay's 'Monarchies,' which he had read at intervals to his schoolfellows. When the master was about to administer severe chastisement to him, both for the tumult which he had occasioned and also for retaining in his possession such a heretical book, the boy very spiritedly replied that the book was not heretical, requested his master to read it, and professed his readiness to submit to punishment, provided any heresy was found in it. This proposal appeared so reasonable to Simson, that he perused the work, which he had not formerly seen, and was convinced of the truth of the boy's statement. He accordingly made the best excuse which he could to the magistrates for the behaviour of his scholars, and advised the friar to abstain in future from extolling miracles and from abusing the Protestant preachers. From that time Simson was friendly to the Reformation."—*MS. History of the Kirk*.—*Ed.*

without grace or warmth; his sentences have no harmony of structure. He stands, however, as far as I have seen, above all other writers in the first half of the Queen's (Elizabeth) reign.—*Hallam*.

There was a primitive honesty and a kindly innocence about this good old scholar which gave a personal interest to the homeliest details of his life. He had the rare felicity of passing through the worst of times without persecution and without dishonour. He lived with princes and princesses, prelates and diplomatists, without offence and without ambition. Though he enjoyed the smiles of royalty, his heart was none the worse, and his fortune little the better. He had that disposition which, above all things, qualifies the conscientious and successful teacher; for he delighted rather to discover and call forth the talents of others than to make a display of his own.—*Hartley Coleridge*.

I never knew a man live more honestly nor die more Christianly.—*Dr. Nowell*.

I had rather have thrown ten thousand pounds into the sea than have lost my Ascham.—*Queen Elizabeth*.

Haddon and Ascham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they have succeeded in prose, no sooner attempt verse than they provoke derision.—*Dr. Johnson*.

It must be owned that Ascham contributed very much to refine and improve the language, and as he was an eminent scholar, to bring the practice of writing it into repute.—*Dr. Hurd*.

## John Knox.

1505-1572.

Zeal, intrepidity, disinterestedness, were virtues which he possessed in an eminent degree. He was acquainted too with the learning cultivated in that age; and excelled in that species of eloquence which is calculated to rouse and to inflame. His maxims, however, were often too severe, and the impetuosity of his temper excessive. Rigid and uncomplying himself, he showed no indulgence to the infirmities of others. Regardless of the distinctions of rank and character, he uttered his admonitions with an acrimony and vehemence more to irritate than to reclaim. This often betrayed him into indecent and undutiful expressions with respect to the Queen's person and conduct.



Those very qualities, however, which now render his character less amiable, fitted him to be the instrument of Providence for advancing the Reformation among a fierce people, and enabled him to face dangers, and to surmount opposition, from which a person of a more gentle spirit would have been apt to shrink back. By an unwearied application to study and to business, as well as by the frequency and fervour of his public discourses, he had worn out a constitution naturally strong. During a lingering illness, he discovered the utmost fortitude, and met the approaches of death with a magnanimity inseparable from his character.—*Robertson*.

The ringleader in all these insults on Majesty was John Knox, who possessed an uncontrolled authority in the Church, and even in the civil affairs of the nation, and who triumphed in the contumelious usage of his sovereign. The political principles of the man, which he communicated to his brethren, were as full of sedition as his theological were full of rage and bigotry. . . . His conduct showed that he thought no more civility than loyalty due to any of the female sex.—*David Hume*.

That fals apostat priest,  
 Enemie to Christ, and mannis (man's) salvation,  
 Your Maister Knox.—*Nicol Burne*.

A fanatical incendiary—a holy savage—the son of violence and barbarism—the religious Sachem of religious Mohawks.—*Whitaker*.

Of all the benefits I had that year (1571) was the coming of that maist notable profet and apostle of our nation, Mr. Johne Knox, to St. Andrews, who, be the faction of the Queen occupying the castell and town of Edinburgh, was compellit to remove therefra, with a number of the best and chusit to come to St. Andrews. I heard him teache there the prophecies of Daniel, that simmar and the wintar following. I had my pen and my little buike, and tuk away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text, he was moderat the space of an half hour ; but when he enterit to application, he made me so to grew (thrill) and tremble, that I could not hald a pen to writ. He was very weik. I saw him, everie day of his doctrine, go hulie and fear (slowly and warily) with a furring of masticks about his neck, a staffe in the an hand, and gud, godlie Richard Ballenden, his servand, haldin up the other oter (arm-pit) from the abbey to the parish-kirk, and he. the said Richard, and

another servand lifted up to the pulpit, whar he behovit to iean at his first entry: bot, er he haid done with his sermone, he was sa active and vigorous, that he was lyk to ding the pulpit in blads (beat the pulpit in pieces) and flie out of it.—*James Melville, "Diary."*

God is my witness, whom I have served in the spirit in the gospel of his Son, that I have taught nothing but the true and solid doctrine of the gospel of the Son of God, and have had it for my only object to instruct the ignorant, to confirm the faithful, to comfort the weak, the fearful, and the distressed, by the promises of grace, and to fight against the proud and rebellious by the Divine threatenings. I know that many have frequently complained, and do still complain, of my too great severity; but God knows that my mind was always void of hatred to the persons of those against whom I thundered the severest judgments.—*John Knox.*

The light of Scotland, the comfort of the Church within the same, the mirror of godliness, and pattern and example to all true ministers in purity of life, soundness of doctrine, and boldness in reprovng of wickedness.—*Bannatyne.*

I know not if ever so much piety and genius were lodged in so weak and frail a body. Certain I am that it will be difficult to find one in whom the gifts of the Holy Spirit shone so bright, to the comfort of the Church of Scotland.—*Smeton.*

A man of wit, much good learning, and earnest zeal.—*Ridley, "Strype's Life of Grindal."*

Knox bore a striking resemblance to Luther in personal intrepidity and in popular eloquence. He approached nearest to Calvin in his religious sentiments, in the severity of his manners, and in a certain impressive air of melancholy which pervaded his character, and he resembled Zwingleius in his ardent attachment to the principles of civil liberty, and in combining his exertions for the reformation of the Church with uniform endeavours to improve the political state of the people.—*Dr. Thomas M'Crie.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Melville was a Doctor of Divinity, and as long as episcopal persecution admitted, did sit with great renown in the prime chair we had of that faculty."—*Baillie.*

<sup>2</sup> Of all Knox's publications, the most famous in its day was "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women." The admission of women to the government of nations is in this attacked with extraordinary and by no means illogical vehemence. "To promote a

I happened to ask where John Knox was buried. Dr. Johnson burst out, "I hope in the highway. I have been looking at his reformations."—*Boswell*.<sup>1</sup>

## George Buchanan.

1506-1582.

That notable man, Mr. George Bucquhanane—remains alyve to this day in the yeir of God 1566 years, to the glory of God, to the gret honour of this natioun, and to the comfort of thame that delyte in letters and vertew. That singulare wark of David's Psalmes in Latin meetre and poesie, besyd mony other, can witness the rare graices of God gevin to that man.—*John Knox*.

A serpent—daring calumniator—leviathan of slander—the second of all human forgers and the first of all human slanderers.—*Whitaker*.

George Buchanan had sometimes, as I have heard, been a preacher in St. Andrews; after his long travells he was employed by our church and state to be a teacher to King James and his family: of his faithfulness in this charge he left, I believe, to the world good and satisfactory tokens. The eminency

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woman," says Knox, "to bear rule, superiority, dominion, or empire, above any realm, nation, or city, is repugnant to nature, contumely to God, a thing most contrarious to his revealed will and approved ordinance, and, finally, it is a subversion of all equity and justice." The gist of his argument is, 1. that women are intended for subjection to men; 2. that female government was not permitted among the Jews; 3. that it is contrary to apostolical injunctions; 4. that it leads to the perversion of governments, &c. This Blast was met by a counterblast. An answer appeared called "An Harboron for Faithful Subjects." The accession of Queen Elizabeth made such a refutation necessary. It was the production of John Aylmer, who had been tutor to Lady Jane Grey. It is odd to note the poor opinion Aylmer has of women, in spite of his intimacy with one who might at least have exalted the sex in his eyes. This literary chevalier thus speaks of the "most part" of those whose cause he espouses; he describes them as "fond, foolish, wanton, flibbergibs, tatlers, trifling, wavering, witles, without counsel, feable, careles, rashe, proud, daintie, nise, tale-bearers, eves-droppers, rumour-raisers, evil-tongued, worse-minded, and in every wise doltified with the dregges of the devil's dounge-hill!" Is the real source of Mr. Carlyle's eloquence at last disclosed?—ED.

<sup>1</sup> "It is," says Chalmers (quoted by Croker), "a little odd, though Boswell has overlooked it, that Knox was buried in a place which soon after became, and ever since has been, a highway—i.e., the old churchyard of St. Giles, in Edinburgh.

of this person was so great that no society of men need be ashamed to have been moderated by his wisdom.—*Baillie, "Historical Vindication."*

In a conversation concerning the literary merits of the two countries, in which Buchanan was introduced, a Scotchman, imagining that on this ground he should have an undoubted triumph over him, exclaimed, "Ah, Doctor Johnson! what would you have said of Buchanan, had he been an Englishman?" "Why, sir," said Johnson, after a little pause, "I should *not* have said of Buchanan, had he been an *Englishman*, what I will now say of him as a *Scotchman*—that he was the only man of genius his country ever produced."—*Boswell.*

His *De jure Regni apud Scotos*, a spirited and elegant dialogue betwixt the author and Thomas Maitland, in which the true principles of Government are delivered; next the distinction betwixt a King and a Tyrant is explained; and the whole concludes with insisting that kings are accountable to their subjects; that this is the condition of kingship, particularly in Scotland, and that tyrants may be judged and even put to death without blame, nay, with the highest honour, by their abused subjects. There is a singular freedom of spirit in this tract, especially for the time when it was written, and it gives me a high idea of the honesty or boldness of this writer, that he presumed to address a discourse of this sort to his pupil, King James the Sixth. This strong love of liberty, to which his warm temper and elevated genius naturally inclined him, was caught, or at least much confirmed in him, by his familiarity with the classical story of the Greeks and Romans, the great doctors of civil liberty to all countries and ages.—*Dr. Hurd.*

## John Foxe.

1517-1587.

Burnet, Strype, and all our best historians have derived their principal information and documents from John Foxe.—*George Townsend.*

The work of John Foxe is one of the most useful, most important, and most valuable books we still possess. It has never been superseded.—*Church of England Q. Review.*

The "Acts and Monuments" of John Foxe, more usually called his "Book of Martyrs," must have a place amongst the principal historical works of the sixteenth century. None

certainly can be compared to it in its popularity and influence. Four editions of these bulky folios were published in the reign of Elizabeth; the first in 1563. It may not be too much to say that it confirmed the Reformation in England. Every parish (by order of the council or the bishops, we forget which) was to have a copy in the church; and every private gentleman, who had any book but the Bible, chose that which stood next in religious esteem.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1831.

As he hath been found most diligent, so most strictly true and faithful in his transcriptions.—*Strype*.

How learnedly he wrote, how constantly he preached, how piously he lived, and how cheerfully he died, may be seen at large in the life prefixed to this book.—*Fuller*.

Foxe in his "Acts and Monuments" writes the martyrology of the Protestants in three mighty folios; where in the third "the tender mercies" of the Catholics are "cut in wood" for those who might not otherwise be enabled to read or spell them. Such pictures are abridgments of long narratives; but they leave in the mind a fulness of horror. Foxe made more than one generation shudder; and his volume, particularly this third, chained to a reading-desk in the halls of the great, and in the aisles of churches, often detained the loiterer, as it furnished some new scene of Papistical horrors to paint forth on his returning to his fireside. The Protestants were then the martyrs, because under Mary the Protestants had been thrown out of power. Dodd has opposed to Foxe three curious folios which he calls "The Church History of England," exhibiting a most abundant martyrology of the Catholics inflicted by the hands of the Protestants, who, in the succeeding reign of Elizabeth, after long trepidations and balancings, were confirmed into power. He grieves over the delusion and the seduction of the black-letter romance of honest John Foxe, which he says, "has obtained a place in Protestant churches next to the Bible, while John Foxe himself is esteemed little less than an Evangelist."—*Isaac D'Israeli*.

### George Peele.

1552-1598.

We are told that his works not only succeeded greatly in his life, but that they were read with great pleasure after his death. He is said in particular to have been a good pastoral poet.

He seems to have derived his reputation more from having been the object of patronage to a nobleman than to the muses, for his merry pranks lifted him into a degree of public opinion, which his works do not by any means appear to bear out. In short, his profligate manners and irregular life but little qualified him for a knowledge of that morality indispensably necessary in the composition of real dramatic entertainment; and it is therefore, though one of his plays has been ignorantly attributed to Shakspeare, that the licentious George Peele, like his imitators, Rochester and Killigrew, is little known but by his jests, "which," an author says, "in literature may be compared to the tricks of a sharper in society, for they are false, specious, and imposing."—*Charles Dibdin's "History of the Stage."*

George Peele, a dramatist and poet of the Elizabethan age, was a native of Devonshire, and was educated at Oxford, where he completed his degrees in arts in 1579. On coming to London he formed an acquaintance with Shakspeare, Jonson, and other dramatic writers, and wrote for the stage. He wrote five plays, which were well received; also some pastoral and other poems. There is a scarce book still extant, entitled, "The Merry Conceits of George Peele."—*Universal Biography.*

## Sir Walter Raleigh.

1552-1618.

The soldier, the sailor, the scholar, the courtier, the orator, the poet, the historian, the philosopher, whom we picture to ourselves sometimes reviewing the Queen's guard, sometimes giving chase to a Spanish galleon, then answering the chiefs of the country party in the House of Commons, then again murmuring one of his sweet love-songs too near the ears of her Highness's maids of honour, and soon after poring over the "Talmud," or collating Polybius with Livy.—*Macaulay.*

The events of his life are interesting; but his character is ambiguous, his actions are obscure, his writings are English, and his fame is confined to the narrow limits of our language and our island.—*Gibbon.*

*Coke.* Thou art the most vile and execrable traitor that ever lived.

*Raleigh.* You speak indiscreetly, barbarously, and uncivilly.

*Coke.* I want words sufficient to express your viperous treasons.

*Raleigh.* I think you want words indeed, for you have spoken one thing half a dozen times.

*Coke.* Thou art an odious fellow ; thy name is hateful to all the realm of England for thy pride.—*State Trials.*

He (Charles James Fox) thought Raleigh a very fine writer. Bolingbroke he did not like. Surrey was "too old" for him.—*Sam. Rogers.*

His poetry, though graceful, is cramped and somewhat disfigured by the fashions of the age.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1825.

Men had leisure to reflect on the hardship, not to say injustice of his sentence ; they pitied his active and enterprising spirit, which languished in the rigours of confinement ; they were struck with the extensive genius of the man, who, being educated amidst naval and military enterprises, had surpassed in the pursuits of literature even those of the most recluse and sedentary lives ; and they admired his unbroken magnanimity, which at his age and under his circumstances could engage him to undertake and execute so great a work as his "History of the World."—*Hume.*

His eyes were large and intelligent, his nose somewhat long, yet not out of proportion ; his lips delicately curved, with a fair moustache on the upper lip, and a beard of moderate growth, handsomely rounded under the chin beneath. His complexion was somewhat browned as if by exposure to foreign climates, or hard service in the wars. His stature was six feet full, with limbs elegantly yet strongly moulded. . . A braver soldier, a handsomer man, or a more accomplished gentleman the Court of Elizabeth did not contain at that time.—"*Shakespeare and his Friends.*"

"One day," quoth he, "I sat (as was my trade)  
Under the foote of Mole, that mountaine here,  
Keeping my sheep amongst the coolly shade  
Of the greene alders by the Mullaes shore ;  
There a straunge shepheard chaunst to finde me out,  
Whether allured with my pipe's delight,  
Whose pleasing sound yshrilled far about,  
Or thither led by chaunce, I know not right :  
Whom when I asked, from what place he came,  
And how he hight himselfe, he did yleepe  
The Shepheard of the Ocean by name,  
And said he came far from the main-sea deepe.

- He, sitting me beside in that same shade,  
Provoked me to plaie some pleasant fit :  
And when he heard the musicke which I made,  
He found himselfe full greatly pleasd at it :  
Yet æmuling my pipe, he tooke in hond  
My pipe, before that æmuled of many,  
And plaid thereon ; (for well that skill he cond ;)   
Himselfe as skilfull in that art as any.  
He pip'd, I sung ; and when he sung, I piped ;  
By chaunge of turnes, each making other mery ;  
Neither envying other, nor envied,  
So piped we, untill we both were weary."—*Spenser*.

### Bishop Jewell.

1552-1618.

The worthiest divine that Christendom hath bred for the space of some hundreds of years.—*Hooker*.

A man to be accounted of as his name doth import, and so esteemed, not only in England, but with all the learned men beyond the seas, that ever knew him or saw his writings.—*Bancroft*.

One of the most precious and peerless Jewels of these later times, for learning, knowledge, judgment, honesty, and industry.—*James*.

That great light and ornament of the Church, whose memory is preserved to this day with due veneration in all the Protestant churches.—*Stillington*.<sup>1</sup>

That so notable a bishop, so learned a man, so stout a champion of true religion, so painful a prelate. . . Thus have I answered in his behalf, who both in this and other like controversies might have been a great stay to this Church of

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<sup>1</sup> "Renowned," says Macaulay, "as a consummate master of all the weapons of controversy." "Stillington," says Bishop Burnet, "was a man of much learning, but of a reserved and haughty temper. He in his youth writ an *Ironicum* for healing our divisions, with so much learning and moderation that it was esteemed a masterpiece. . . . After that he wrote against infidelity beyond any that had gone before him. And then he engaged to write against popery, which he did with such an exactness and liveliness, that no books of controversy were so much read and valued as his were. He was a great man in many respects. He knew the world, and was esteemed a wise man."—*Ed.*



England, if we had been worthy of him. But whilst he lived, and especially after his most notable and profitable travails, he received the same reward of ungrateful tongues, that other men may be exercised with, and all must look for that will do their duty.—*Whitgift*.

## Richard Hooker.

1553-1600.

"Though I had lately said I never met with an English book whose writer deserved the name of author, yet there now appeared a wonder to them, and it would be so to his Holiness, if it were in Latin; for a poor obscure English priest had written four such books of Laws and Church Polity, and in a style that expressed such a grave or so humble a majesty, with such clear demonstrations of reason, that in all their readings they had not met with any that exceeded him."—*Cardinal Allen or Dr. Stapleton to Pope Clement VIII., quoted by Walton*.

Though nothing can be spoke worthy his fame,  
Or remembrance of that precious name,  
Judicious Hooker; though this cost he spent  
On him that hath a lasting monument  
In his own books: yet ought we to express,  
If not his worth, yet our respectfulness.  
Church ceremonies he maintained: then why  
Without all ceremony should he die?  
Was it because his life and death should be  
Both equal patterns of humility?  
Or that perhaps this only glorious one  
Was above all to ask why he had none?

*Sir William Cowper.*

The school of divinity of which Hooker was the chief, occupies a middle place between the school of Cranmer and the school of Laud; and Hooker has, in modern times, been claimed by the Arminians as an ally. Yet Hooker pronounced Calvin to have been a man superior in wisdom to any other divine that France had produced.—*Macaulay*.

Mr. Chetwind fell commending of Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity" as the best book and the only one that made him a Christian, which puts me upon the buying of it, which I will do shortly.—*Pepys*.

I have lived to see this world is made up of perturbations ; and I have been long preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of my making my account with God, which I now apprehend to be near : and though I have by His grace loved Him in my youth, and feared Him in my age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence to Him and to all men ; yet if Thou, O Lord, be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it ? And therefore when I have failed, Lord, show mercy to me ; for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness for His merits who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe Thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take Thine own time. I submit to it ; let not mine, O Lord, but let Thy will be done.—*Richard Hooker.*

His sermons were neither long nor earnest, but uttered with a grave zeal and an humble voice ; his eyes always fixed on one place to prevent his imagination from wandering, insomuch that he seemed to study as he spake. The design of his sermons (as indeed of all his discourses) was to show reasons for what he spake ; and with these reasons such a kind of rhetoric as did rather convince and persuade than frighten men into piety ; studying not so much for matter (which he never wanted) as for apt illustrations to inform and teach his unlearned hearers by familiar examples, and then make them better by convincing applications ; never labouring by hard words, and then by needless distinctions and subdistinctions, to amuse his hearers, and get the glory to himself ; but glory only to God. Which intention he would say “was as discernible in a preacher as a natural from an artificial beauty.”—*J. Walton.*

Though I dare not say that I knew Mr. Hooker, yet as our ecclesiastical history reports to the honour of S. Ignatius “that he lived in the time of S. John, and had seen him in his childhood,” so I also joy that in my minority I have often seen Mr. Hooker with my father, who was after Bishop of London ; from whom and others at that time I have heard most of the material passages which you relate in the history of his life ; and from my father received such a character of his learning, humility, and other virtues, that, like jewels of invaluable price, they shall cast such a lustre, as envy or the rust of time shall never darken.—*Dr. King.*

Hooker he (Dr. Johnson) admired for his logical precision.—*Hawkins*.

You justly conceive Hooker to be a great favourite of mine. Setting aside the inestimable importance of the subject on which he treats, he is so very fine a writer that I am often astonished at the *little*, I had almost said at the *no* progress, we have made in composition and in the improvement of the English language since his day.—*Hannah More*.

### John Lyly.<sup>1</sup>

1553-1606.

"Euphues" had rather lye shut in a Ladye's casket, than open in a Scholler's studie.—*Euphues*.

John Lyly hath deserved most high commendations, as he hath stept one step further (therein) than any either before or since he begun his witty discourse of his "Euphues." Whose works, surely, in respect of his singular eloquence and brave composition of apt words and sentences, let the learned examine and make trial thereof through all the parts of Rhetorick, in fit phrases, in pithy sentences, in gallant tropes, in flowing speech,

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<sup>1</sup> In Hazlitt's "Lectures on the Drama" mention is made of Lyly. He is referred to in a passage of such exquisite beauty that it would be injurious to suppress a single line:—"Here on Salisbury Plain, where I write this, even here with a few old authors, I can manage to get through the winter or the summer months without ever knowing what it is to feel *ennui*. They sit with me at breakfast, they walk out with me before dinner. After a long walk through unfrequented tracts—after starting the hare from the fern, or hearing the wing of the raven rustling over my head, or being greeted with the woodman's stern "good night" as he strikes into his narrow homeward path—I can take mine ease at mine inn beside the blazing hearth, and shake hands with Signor Orlando Frescobaldo as the oldest acquaintance I have. Ben Jonson, learned Chapman, Master Webster, and Master Heywood are there; and seated round, discourse the silent hours away. Shakspeare is there himself, rich in Cibber's manager's coat. Spenser is hardly returned from a ramble through the woods, or is concealed behind a group of nymphs, fawns, and satyrs. Milton lies on the table as on an altar, never taken up or laid down without reverence. Lyly's "Endymion" sleeps with the moon that shines in at the window; and a breath of wind stirring at a distance seems a sigh from the tree under which he grew old. Faustus disputes in one corner of the room with fiendish faces and reasons of divine theology. Bellapont soothes Matteo, Vittoria triumphs over her judges, and old Chapman repeats one of the hymns of Homer in his own fine translation."

in plain sense, and surely in my judgment I think he will yield him that verdict—that from one nothing may be taken away, to the other nothing may be added.—*William Webbe*, 1586.

Nash the Ape of Greene, Greene the Ape of Euphues, Euphues the Ape of Ennuie.—*G. Hervey*.

Lyly famous for facility in discourse.—*Lodge*, 1596.

Eloquent and witty John Lyly.—*F. Meres*, 1598.

Lyly was a man of great reading, good memory, ready faculty of application, and uncommon eloquence; but he ran into a vast excess of allusion. In sentence and conformity of style he seldom speaks directly to the purpose; but is continually carried away by one odd allusion or simile or other.—*W. Oldys*.

His style is a kind of prodigy for neatness, clearness, and precision. . . A judicious head may receive great improvement by reading his works, which are now scarcely ever mentioned.—*Literary Magazine*, 1758.

These notable productions were full of pedantic and affected phraseology, and of high-strained antitheses of thought and expression.—*Gifford*.

("Euphues") is a tissue of antitheses and alliteration, and therefore justly entitled to the appellation of affected; but we cannot, with Berkenhout, consider it as a most contemptible piece of nonsense.—*N. Drake*.

Notwithstanding all exaggeration, Lyly was really a man of wit and imagination, though both were deformed by the most unnatural affectation that ever disgraced a printed page.—*Sir W. Scott*.

John Lyly was an ingenious scholar with some fancy; but if poetry be the heightened expression of natural sentiments and impressions, he has little title to the rank of poet. The chief characteristic of his style, besides its smoothness, is the employment of a species of fabulous or unnatural natural philosophy, in which the existence of certain animals, vegetables, and minerals, with peculiar properties, is presumed, in order to afford similes and illustrations.—*J. Payne Collier*.

The style which obtained celebrity is antithetical and sententious to affectation; the perpetual effort with no adequate success, rendering the book equally disagreeable and ridiculous, though it might not be difficult to find passages rather more happy and ingenious than the rest.—*Hallam*.

("Euphues") as brave, righteous, and pious a book as man need look into.—*C. Kingsley*.

He was always averse to the crabbed studies of logic and philosophy. For so it was that his genie, being naturally bent to the pleasant paths of poetry (as if Apollo had given to him a wreath of his own bays without snatching or struggling), did in a manner neglect academical studies; yet not so much but that he took the degrees in arts, that of master being completed 1575; at which time as he was esteemed at the university a noted wit, so afterwards was in the Court of Q. Elizabeth, where he was also reputed a rare poet, witty, comical, and facetious.—*Anthony à Wood.*

### Edmund Spenser.

1553-1599.

No poet has ever had a more exquisite sense of the beautiful than Spenser.—*Prof. Wilson.*

Spenser may be justly said to excel Ariosto in originality of invention, in force and variety of character, in strength and vividness of conception, in depth of reflection, in fertility of imagination, and above all, in that exclusively poetical cast of feeling which discerns in everything what common minds do not perceive.—*Hallam.*

The nobility of the Spensers has been illustrated and enriched by the trophies of Marlborough; but I exhort them to consider the "Faëry Queen" as the most precious jewel of their coronet.—*Gibbon.*

Grave moral SPENSER after these came on,  
Than whom I am persuaded there was none,  
Since the blind Bard his Iliads up did make,  
Fitter a task like that to undertake;  
To set down boldly, bravely to invent,  
In all our knowledge surely excellent.

*Michael Drayton.*

The characteristics of this sweet and amiable allegorical poet are, not only strong and circumstantial imagery, but tender and pathetic feeling, a most melodious flow of versification, and a certain pleasing melancholy in his sentiments, the constant companion of an elegant taste, that casts a delicacy and grace over all his compositions.—*Warton.*

There is a something in Spenser that pleases one as strongly in one's old age as it did in one's youth. I read the "Faëry

Queen" when I was about *twelve* with a vast deal of delight ; and I think it gave me as much when I read it over about a year or two ago.—*Pope*.

In all his fantastic prodigality of invention, Spenser is never restrained by the want of adequate language. His endless train of images array themselves instantaneously in varied and harmonious words ; if his eye is sensitive to every form of beauty, so is his ear to every sound of music : the very difficulty and complexity of his stanza shows at once his unlimited command of poetic language, and that language falls at once, with rare instances of effort or artificial skill, into flowing and easy verse. His very faults seem to me out of the wanton redundancy of power, rather than from the constraint of insufficient or inflexible diction. Whatever English poetic language may have gained in vigour, in perspicuity, or in precision, almost its earliest poet seems to have discovered and exhausted its fertility, its pliancy, its melody.—*Quarterly Review*.

Spenser, though assuredly one of the greatest poets that ever lived, could not succeed in the attempt to make allegory interesting. It was in vain that he lavished the riches of his mind on the House of Pride and the House of Temperance. One unpardonable fault, the fault of tediousness, pervades the whole of the "Fairy Queen." We become sick of cardinal virtues and deadly sins, and long for the society of plain men and women. Of the persons who read the first canto, not one in ten reaches the end of the first book, and not one in a hundred perseveres to the end of the poem. Very few and very weary are those who are in at the death of the Blatant Beast—*Macaulay*.

Whose deep conceit is such

As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.—*Shakspeare*.

All his hopes were crossed, all suits denied ;

Discouraged, scorned, his writings vilified ;

Poorly, poor man, he lived ; poorly, poor man, he died.

*Phineas Fletcher*.

A silver trumpet Spenser blows,

And, as its martial notes to silence flee,

From a virgin chorus flows

A hymn in praise of spoolless Chastity.

'Tis still ! Wild warblings from th' Æolian lyre

Enchantment softly breathe, and tremblingly expire.

*Keats*.

Spenser had but little knowledge of men as *men* ; the cardinal virtues were the personages he was acquainted with ; in everything he was "high fantastical," and, as a consequence, he exhibits neither humour nor pathos. He was a Platonist and fed his grave spirit on high speculations and moralities. Severe and chivalrous, dreaming of things to come, unsupplied by luxury, unenslaved by passion, somewhat scornful and self-sustained, it needed but a tyrannous king, an electrical political atmosphere, and a deeper interest in theology, to make a Puritan of him, as these things made a Puritan of Milton.—*Alexander Smith.*

The Queen was far from having a just sense of his merit ; and Lord Burleigh, who prevented her giving him a hundred pounds, seems to have thought the lowest clerk in his office a more deserving person. He died in want of bread.—*Dr. Granger.*

The many *Chaucerisms* used (for I will not say affected by him) are thought by the ignorant to be blemishes, known by the learned to be beauties to his book, which notwithstanding had been more saleable if more conformed to our modern language.—*Fuller.*

Had I time I could enlarge on the beautiful turns of words and thoughts which are as requisite in this as in heroic poetry itself. With these beautiful works I confess myself to have been unacquainted till about twenty years ago, in a conversation which I had with that noble wit of Scotland, Sir George Mackenzie, he asked me why I did not imitate in my verse the turns of Mr. Waller and Sir John Denham, of which he repeated many to me. I had often read with pleasure, and with some profit, these two fathers of our English poetry ; but had not seriously enough considered their beauties, which give the last perfection to their works. Some sprinklings of this I had also formerly in my plays ; but they were casual and not designed. But this hint, thus seasonably given to me, first made me sensible of my own wants, and brought me afterwards to seek for the supply of them in other English authors. I looked over the darling of my youth, the famous Cowley—there I found, instead of them, the points of wit and quirks of epigram ; but no elegant turns, either on the word or on the thought. Then I consulted a greater genius (without offence to the manes of that noble author), I mean Milton ; but as he endeavours everywhere to express Homer, whose age had not arrived to that fineness, I found in him a true sublimity, lofty

thoughts which were clothed with admirable Grecisms, and ancient words which he had been digging from the mines of Chaucer and Spenser, and which, with all their rusticity, had somewhat of venerable in them; but I found not there neither that for which I looked. At last I had recourse to his master, Spenser, the author of that immortal poem called the "Faëry Queen," and there I met with that which I had been looking for so long in vain. Spenser had studied Virgil to as much advantage as Milton had done Homer.—*Dryden, Preface to "Juvenal."*

This poet contains great beauties, a sweet and harmonious versification, easy elocution, a fine imagination. Yet does the perusal of his work become so tedious that one never finishes it from the mere pleasure that it affords. It soon becomes a kind of task reading; and it requires some effort and resolution to carry us on to the end of his long performance. Upon the whole Spenser maintains his place upon the shelves among our English classics; but he is seldom seen on the table, and there is scarcely any one, if he dares to be ingenuous, but will confess that, notwithstanding all the merit of the poet, he affords an entertainment with which the palate is soon satiated.—*Hume.*

In him the spirit of chivalry elevated the love of the beautiful; and both, while ennobled by a meditative piety, were enriched by all the gentler associations of classical song. He was a man of graver mind than belonged to any of his models, and we miss in him that buoyant gaiety which animates the poets of the South; but such deficiencies were amply atoned for by that tenderly contemplative spirit which pervades his poetry.—*Edinburgh Review, 1831.*

No poet that ever lived had a more exquisite sense of the beautiful than Spenser. Of profounder passion many poets have been blest or cursed with the power. His were indeed "thoughts that breathe," but not "words that burn." His words have a lambent light. Reading him is like gazing on the starry skies—or on the skies without a star—except perhaps one—the evening star—and all the rest of the heaven in still possession of the moon. His love of woman's life is spiritual, yet voluptuous; and desire itself is hallowed, kindling at sight of beauty "emparadised in such sweet flesh."—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

The Rubens of English Poetry.—*T. Campbell.*



## Sir Philip Sidney.

1554-1586.

In Sir Philip Sidney we behold Mæcenæ and Marcellus united, who with the strongest eloquence could at once teach the best rules of poetry, the most beautifully and gallantly rewarded men of letters and science ; who, as a soldier, like Publius Decius, freely rewarded the partners of his victories ; and also like Decius devoted himself in battle for his country.  
—*Arthur Collins.*

(The "Arcadia") the most tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastime romance which the patience of a young virgin in love cannot now wade through.—*Walpole.*

After writing with the *sang froid* and prolixity of Made-moiselle Scuderi, Sidney died with the rashness of a volunteer.  
—*Ibid.*

The true spirit and vein of poetry shines most in Sir Philip Sidney, whom I esteem to be the greatest writer and genius of any who have left writings behind them in this or any other age.—*Waller.*

The noble Sidney with this last arose,  
That Heroe for numbers and for prose,  
That throughly pac'd our language as to show  
The plenteous English hand in hand might goe  
With Greek and Latin.—*Michael Drayton.*

The bravest and most chivalrous of poets, the younger, gentler, more lettered Bayard, *our* knight without fear and reproach.—*M. R. Mitford.*

That most heroick spirit,  
The heaven's pride, the glory of our days.—*Spenser.*

His end was not writing even while he wrote, nor his knowledge moulded for tables or school ; but both his wit and understanding beat upon his heart, to make himself and others, not in word or opinion, but in life and action, good and great.—*Lord Brooke.*

How happened it that Sir Philip Sidney in his "Arcadia," and afterwards Spenser in his "Faery Queen," observed so unnatural a conduct in those works, in which the story proceeds as it were by snatches, and with continual interruption ?

How was the good sense of those writers, so conversant besides in the best models of antiquity, seduced into this preposterous method? The answer no doubt is, that they were copying the design, or disorder rather, of Ariosto, a favourite poet of that time.—*Hurd.*

The man that looks, sweet Sidney, in thy face,  
Beholding there love's truest majesty,  
And the soft image of departed grace,  
Shall fill his mind with magnanimity :  
There may he read unfeigned humility,  
And golden pity, born of heavenly brood,  
Unsullied thoughts of immortality,  
And musing virtue, prodigal of blood.—*Lord Thurlow.*

Sidney was a refinement upon nobility. He was like the abstract and essence of romantic fiction, having the courage (but not the barbarity) of the preux chevaliers of ancient times—their unwearied patience—their tender and stainless attachment. He was a hero of chivalry without the grossness and frailty of flesh. He lived beloved and admired, and died universally and deservedly lamented. He is the last of those who have passed into a marvel ; for he is now remembered almost as the ideal personification of a true knight, and is translated to the skies, like the belt of the hunter Orion or Berenice's starry hair.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1825.

This person is described by the writers of that age as the most perfect model of an accomplished gentleman that could be found, even by the wanton imagination of poetry or fiction. Virtuous conduct, polite conversation, heroic valour, and elegant erudition, all concurred to render him the ornament and delight of the English court ; and as the credit which he possessed with the Queen and the Earl of Leicester was wholly employed in the encouragement of genius and literature, his praises have been transmitted with advantage to posterity.—*Hume.*

Sydney, than whom a gentler braver man  
His own delightful genius never feigned,  
Illustrating the vales of Arcady  
With courteous courage and with loyal loves.—*Southey.*

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## Lord Bacon.

1561-1626.

Before any parallel to him can be formed, not only must a man of the same talents be produced, but he must be placed in the same circumstances; the memory of his predecessor must be effaced and the light of science, after being entirely extinguished, must be again beginning to revive. If a second Bacon is ever to arise, he must be ignorant of the first.—*Prof. Playfair.*

A very estimable author and philosopher. His style stiff and rigid; his wit unnatural and far-fetched.—*Hume.*

She (Queen Elizabeth) did acknowledge you had a great wit and an excellent gift of speech, and much other good learning. But in law she rather thought you could make *shew* to the utmost of your knowledge than that you were *deep*.—*Earl of Essex to Francis Bacon.*

My lord Chancellor Bacon is lately dead of a long languishing weakness; he died so poor that he scarce left money to bury him, which, although he had a great wit, did argue no great wisdom; it being one of the essential properties of a man to provide for the main chance.—*Howell.*

My conceit of his person was never increased towards him by his place or honours; but I have and do reverence him for the greatness that was only proper to himself; in that he seemed to me ever, by his work, one of the greatest men and most worthy of admiration that had been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed God would give him strength; for greatness he could not want.—*Ben Jonson.*

He had the sound, distinct, comprehensive knowledge of Aristotle, with all the beautiful lights, graces, and embellishments of Cicero.—*Addison.*

Who is there that upon hearing the name of Lord Bacon does not instantly recognise everything of genius the most profound, everything of literature the most extensive, everything of discovery the most penetrating, everything of observation of human life the most distinguishing and refined?—*Burke.*

Bacon, like Moses, led us forth at last;  
The barren wilderness he pass'd,  
Did on the very border stand  
Of the bless'd promis'd Land,

- And from the mountain-top of his exalted wit  
Saw it himself, and show'd us it.—*Cowley*.

The great secretary of nature and all learning.—*Walton*.

His understanding resembled the tent which the fairy Pariabanon gave to Prince Ahmed. Fold it, and it seemed a toy for the hand of a lady; spread it, and the armies of powerful Sultans might repose beneath its shade.—*Macaulay*.

One of the most extensive and improv'd Genius's we have had any instance of in our own nation, or in any other, was that of Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam. This great man, by an extraordinary force of nature, compass of thought, and indefatigable study, had amassed to himself such stores of knowledge, as we cannot look upon without amazement. His capacity seems to have grasp'd all that was reveal'd in Books before his time; and not satisfied with that, he began to strike out new tracks of science, too many to be travell'd over by any one man, in the compass of the longest life.—*John Hughes*.

He may be compared with those liberators of nations who have given them laws by which they might govern themselves, and retained no homage but their gratitude.—*Hallam*.

With the same pen which demolished the Aristotelism of the schoolmen, he writes a treatise on the laws, a cure for the gout, the translation of a psalm, and an essay on plantations.—*Lord Lytton*.

In Bacon's Essays the superiority of his genius appears to the greatest advantage; the novelty and depth of his reflections often receiving a strong relief from the triteness of the topic. The volume may be read from beginning to end in a few hours, and yet after the twentieth perusal one seldom fails to remark in it something overlooked before. This indeed is a characteristic of all Bacon's writings, and is only to be accounted for by the inexhaustible aliment they furnish to our own thoughts, and the sympathetic activity they impart to our torpid faculties.—*Dugald Stewart*.

Bacon, in writing his history of Henry VII., does not seem to have consulted any record, but to have taken what he found in other histories, and blended it with what he learned by tradition.—*Dr. Johnson*.

We yield to none in our grateful veneration for Lord Bacon's philosophical writings. We are proud of his very name as men of science; and as Englishmen we are almost vain of it. But we may not permit the honest workings of national attachment

to degenerate into the jealous and indiscriminate partiality of clanship. Unawed by such as praise and abuse by wholesale, we dare avow that there are points in the character of our Verulam, from which we turn to the life and labours of John Kepler as, from gloom to sunshine.—*Coleridge*.

The world to Bacon does not only owe  
Its present knowledge, but its future too.—*Dryden*.

The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.—*Pope*.

It was as a philosopher that Bacon conquered immortality, and here he stands superior to all who went before and to all who have followed him. If he be not entitled to a place in the interior of the splendid temple which he imagined for those who, by inventing arts, have embellished life, his statue ought to appear in the more honourable position of the portico, as the great master who has taught how arts are to be invented. . . he accomplished more for the real advancement of knowledge than any of those who spent their lives in calm meditation under sequestered porticos or amidst academic groves.—*Lord Campbell*.

If we consider the variety of talents displayed by this man, as a public speaker, a man of business, a wit, a courtier, a companion, an author, a philosopher, he is justly the object of great admiration. If we consider him merely as an author and philosopher, the light in which we view him at present, though very estimable, he was yet inferior to his contemporary Gallileo, perhaps even to Kepler.—*David Hume*.

The uncomparable Verulam.—*Hooker*.

It was Bacon who emancipated and set free philosophy, which had long been a miserable captive, and which ever since made conquests in the territories of nature.—*Evelyn*.

It was owing to the sagacity and freedom of Lord Bacon that men were then pretty well enabled both to make discoveries and to remove the impediments that had hitherto kept physics from being useful.—*Boyle*, "*Experiments and Observations Touching Cold*."

Human reason, unshackled and independent, took her bent from his hands; and learned societies in every part of Europe—on the banks of the Wolga, the Po, and the Danube—either rose up at his name, or reconstructed their plans after his direction. The collective wits of the brightest of European nations—as little inclined as the Greeks to look out of themselves for excellencies—have paid homage to him as the Solon

of modern science, and founded upon his partition of the sciences an encyclopædia which was once the marvel and the glory of literature. The tribes of every age and nation regard the father of modern philosophy with the reverence and devotion of children; and so loud and universal has been the acclaim, that the testimony of our own epoch falls on the ear like the voice of a child closing the shout of a multitude.—*Josph Devey.*

## William Shakspeare.

1564-1616.

I have heard Sir William Davenant and Thomas Shadwell (who is accounted the best comedian we have now) say that he had a most prodigious wit.—*Aubrey.*

The man whom nature self had made  
To mock herself and Truth to imitate.—*Spenser.*

An upstart crow beautified with our feathers.—*Greene.*

As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakspeare.—*Anon., 1598.*

I have heard that Mr. Shakspeare was a natural wit, without any art at all; hee frequented the plaies all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford and supplied the stage with two plaies every yeare, and for itt had an allowance so large that hee spent att the rate of 1000*l.* a-year, as I have heard.—*Rev. J. Ward, 1648.*

He was honest and of an open and free nature.—*Ben Jonson.*

The merit of Shakspeare is such as the ignorant can take in and the learned add nothing to.—*Johnson.*

It is Shakspeare's peculiar excellence that throughout the whole of his splendid picture-gallery (the reader will excuse the confessed inadequacy of this metaphor) we find individuality everywhere, mere portrait nowhere. In all his various characters we still feel ourselves communing with the same human nature, which is everywhere present, as the vegetable sap in the branches, sprays, leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruits, their shapes, tastes, odours. Speaking of the effect—*i.e.*, his works themselves, we may define the excellence of their method as consisting in that just proportion, that union and inter-

penetration of the universal and the particular which must ever pervade all works of decided genius and true science.—*Coleridge.*

Each change of many-colour'd life he drew :  
Exhausted worlds and then imagined new ;  
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,  
And panting time toil'd after him in vain.—*Johnson.*

To him the mighty mother did unveil  
Her awful face.—*Gray.*

But Shakspeare's magic could not copy'd be,  
Within that circle none durst walk but he.—*Dryden.*

Among the English Shakspeare has incomparably excelled all others. That noble extravagance of fancy which he had in so great a perfection, thoroughly qualified him to touch this weak superstitious part of his reader's imagination, and made him capable of succeeding where he had nothing to support him besides the strength of his own genius. There is something so wild and yet so solemn in the speeches of his ghosts, fairies, witches and the like imaginary persons, that we cannot forbear thinking them natural, though we have no rule by which to judge of them, and must confess if there are such beings in the world it looks highly probable that they should talk and act as he has represented them.—*Addison.*

Shakspeare and Milton have had their rise, and they will have their decline.—*Byron.*

Shakspeare possesses the power of subordinating nature for the purposes of expression beyond all poets. His imperial muse tosses the creation like a bauble from hand to hand to embody any capricious thought that is uppermost in his mind. The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and the furthest sundered things are brought together by a subtle spiritual connexion.—*R. W. Emerson.*

I think most readers of Shakspeare sometimes find themselves thrown into exalted mental conditions like those produced by music. Then they may drop the book to pass at once into the region of thoughts without words.—*O. W. Holmes.*

Of all the literary exertitions of speculative men, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the world, there are none of so much importance as those which let us into the

knowledge of our nature. Others may exercise the reason or amuse the imagination ; but these only can improve the heart and form the mind to wisdom. Now in this science Shakspeare confessedly occupies the foremost place ; whether we consider the amazing sagacity with which he investigates every hidden spring and wheel of human action, or his happy manner of communicating this knowledge in the just and living paintings he has given us of all our passions, appetites, and pursuits.—*Warburton*.

Whatever other learning he wanted he was master of two books unknown to many profound readers, though books which the last conflagration can alone destroy, I mean the Book of Nature and that of Man.—*Young*.<sup>1</sup>

His rude unpolished style and antiquated phrase and wit.—*Lord Shaftesbury*.

It might seem that Shakspeare, astonished at his own wonderful success in embodying his conceptions in that language which started up unbidden to his lips, began to mistrust his own inexplicable faculty, and to suppose that with strong effort he might attain even greater things. Shakspeare is never great and happy except when he strives to be peculiarly so. But in his ordinary, in his happier vein, Shakspeare, independent of all his other unspeakable claims upon our admiration and gratitude, has that of showing that our language is not merely capable of supplying the retired and unworldly fancy of the poet, who stands aloof from common life, with an inexhaustible profusion of bright and harmonious words, but likewise of bringing poetry, as it were, into the busy stir of men, into courts and cities, into the agitated palaces of the great, and the humble household of the poor.—*Quarterly Review*.

Was there ever such stuff as great part of Shakspeare? Only one must not say so. But what think you? What? Is there not sad stuff? What? What?—*George III*.

Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,  
Hath built thyself a livelong monument.  
For whilst to the shame of slow endeavouring art  
Thy easy numbers flow : and that each heart,  
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book  
Those Delphic lines with deep impressions took ;

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<sup>1</sup> The Poet.



Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,  
 Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;  
 And so supulchred, in such pomp dost lie  
 That kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.—*Milton.*

In Shakspeare one sentence begets the next naturally: the meaning is all inwoven. He goes on kindling like a meteor through the dark atmosphere; yet when the creation in its outline is once perfect, then he seems to rest from his labour and smile upon his work and tell himself that it is very good. You see many scenes and parts of scenes which are simply Shakspeare's disporting himself in joyous triumph and vigorous fun, after a great achievement of his highest genius.—*Coleridge, "Table Talk."*

You would say in no point does he *exaggerate*, but only in laughter. Fiery objurgations, words that pierce and burn, are to be found in Shakspeare. Yet he is always in measure here; never what Johnson would remark as a specially "good hater." But his laughter seems to pour from him in floods: he heaps all manner of ridiculous nicknames on the butt, tumbles and tosses him in all sorts of horseplay: you would say roars and laughs. And then, if not always the purest, it is always a genial laughter. Not at mere weakness, at poverty, or misery; never. No man who *can* laugh, what we call laughing, will laugh at these things. It is some poor character *desiring* to laugh, and have the credit of wit that does so. Laughter means sympathy; good laughter is not "the crackling of thorns under the pot." Even at stupidity and pretension this Shakspeare does not laugh otherwise than genially. Dogberry and Verges tickle our very hearts, and we dismiss them covered with explosions of laughter; but we like the poor fellows only the better for our laughing; and hope that they will get on well there, and continue presidents of the city watch. Such laughter, like sunshine on the deep sea, is very beautiful.—*Carlyle.*

A loose he gave to his unbounded soul,  
 And taught new lands to rise, new seas to roll;  
 Called into being scenes unknown before,  
 And passing nature's bounds, was something more.  
*Churchill.*

Shakspeare (whom you and every playhouse bill  
 Style the divine, the matchless, what you will),

- For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,  
And grew immortal in his own despite.—*Pope*.

If Shakspeare be considered as a Man, born in a rude age and educated in the lowest manner, without any instruction either from the world or from books, he may be regarded as a prodigy: if represented as a Poet, capable of furnishing a proper entertainment to a refined or intelligent audience, we must abate much of this eulogy. In his compositions we regret that many irregularities, and even absurdities should so frequently disfigure the animated and passionate scenes intermixed with them; and at the same time we perhaps admire the more those beauties on account of their being surrounded with such deformities.—*Hume*.<sup>1</sup>

Many were the wit combats betwixt him (Shakspeare) and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson (like the former), was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakspeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.—*Fuller*.

And thus when William's acts divine  
No longer shall from Bourbon's line  
Draw one vindictive vow;  
When Sidney shall with Cato rest  
And Russell move the patriot breast  
No more than Brutus now;  
Yet then shall Shakspeare's pow'rful art  
O'er ev'ry passion, ev'ry heart,  
Confirm his awful throne;  
Tyrants shall bow before his laws,  
And freedom's, glory's, virtue's cause  
Their dread assertor own.—*Akenside*.

The genius of Shakspeare was an innate universality—wherefore he laid the achievement of human intellect prostrate beneath his indolent and kingly gaze. He could do easily man's utmost—his plan of tasks to come was not of this world. If what he proposed to do hereafter would not, in the idea,

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<sup>1</sup> Hume's candid opinion of Shakspeare was "a disproportioned and misshapen giant."—*Ed*.

answer the aim, how tremendous must have been his conception of ultimates!—*John Keats*.

## Christopher Marlowe.

1564-1593.

Marlowe was in felicity of thought and strength of expression second only to Shakspeare himself. (As a dramatist, however, he is inferior to others.) Some of his turns of thought are even like those of our matchless poet: as when he speaks of

“ Unwedded maids

Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows,

Than have the white breasts of the queen of love ;”

or of a temple—

“ That *threats* the stars with her aspiring top ;”

and where he refers to a man who has an amiable soul—

“ If sin by custom grow not into nature ;”

and many others.—*Lord Jeffrey*.

There is a lust of power in his writings, a hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, a glow of the imagination unhallowed by anything but its own energies.—*Hazlitt*.

Kit Marlowe is beyond comparison the finest of the neglected poets.—*Hibbert*.

Marlowe's mighty line.—*Jonson*.

A kind of second Shakspeare.—*Phillips, Theat. Poet. Angli*.

The best of poets.—*Heywood*.

His fancy is rich and his feeling is tender, and his conceptions of dramatic character have no inconsiderable mixture of solid veracity and ideal beauty.—*Campbell*.

## Sir Henry Wotton.

1568-1639.

He was a man of as florid a wit and as elegant a pen as any former (of ours which in that kind is most excellent) age hath ever produced.—*Dr. King*.

He was a great lover of his neighbours, and a bountiful entertainer of them very often at his table, where his meat was choice and his discourse better.—*Isaak Walton*.

He was a great enemy to wrangling disputes of religion ; concerning which I shall say a little, both to testify that and to show the readiness of his wit. Having at his being in Rome made acquaintance with a pleasant priest, who incited him one evening to hear their vesper music at church ; the priest seeing Sir Henry stand obscurely in a corner, sends to him by a boy of the choir this question, writ on a small piece of paper, " Where was your religion to be found before Luther ? " To which question Sir Henry presently underwrit, " My religion was to be found then where yours is not to be found now, in the written word of God. "—*Ibid.*

He did the utmost bounds of knowledge find,  
And found them not so large as was his mind ;  
But like the brave Pellean youth, did moan,  
Because that art had no more worlds than one.  
And when he saw that he through all had passed,  
He died lest he should idle grow at last.—*Cowley.*

## Archbishop Laud.

1573-1644.

Ever since I came in place, I have laboured nothing more than that the external public worship of God, so much slighted in divers parts of this kingdom, might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be. For I evidently saw that the public neglect of God's service in the outward face of it, and the nasty lying of many places dedicated to that service, had almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God, which while we live in the body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour.—*Laud.*

A poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman.—*Macaulay.*

He was a learned, a sincere, and zealous man, regular in his own life, and humble in his deportment ; but was a hot, indiscreet man, eagerly pursuing some matters that were either very inconsiderable or mischievous, such as setting the Communion table by the east walls of churches, bowing to it and calling it the altar, the suppressing the Walloons privileges, the

breaking of lectures, the encouraging of sports on the Lord's day, with some other things that were of no value.—*Burnet*.

This man was virtuous, if severity of manners alone, and abstinence from pleasure, could deserve that name. He was learned, if polemical knowledge could entitle him to that praise. He was disinterested, but with unceasing industry he studied to exalt the priestly and prelatical character, which was his own. His zeal was unrelenting in the cause of religion; that is, in imposing by rigorous measures his own tenets and pious ceremonies on the obstinate puritans who had profanely dared to oppose him. In prosecution of his holy purposes, he overlooked every human consideration; or in other words, the heat and indiscretion of his temper made him neglect the views of prudence and rules of good manners. He was in this respect happy, that all his enemies were also imagined by him the declared enemies to loyalty and true piety, and that every exercise of his anger by that means, became in his eyes a merit and virtue. This was the man who acquired so great an ascendant over Charles, and who led him by the facility of his temper into a conduct which proved so fatal to himself and to his kingdom.—*David Hume*.

He had not knowledge of the world enough to govern a petty college.—*Bolingbroke*.

He was certainly no Papist, if by that term is meant one who agrees with the Church of Rome in its essential doctrines. But he was, in truth, much addicted to the pomp and ceremonious observances of that Church; both from his natural disposition, which was somewhat superstitious, and from a persuasion of the importance of external ceremony in Divine worship to the great ends of religion. Hence he was forward to catch at any old and obsolete canon that would countenance him in reviving any ceremony, not considering the offence such innovations (for innovations they would be called on account of their long desuetude, whatever might be alleged from some canons in their favour) must needs give to the squeamish stomachs of that time.—*Bishop Hurd*.

## Dr. John Donne.

1573-1631.

Dr. Donne, the greatest wit, though not the greatest poet of our nation.—*Dryden*.

Corrupted nature sorrow'd that she stood  
So near the danger of becoming good ;  
And when he preach'd, she wished her ears exempt  
From piety, that had such power to tempt.—*Chidley.*

His abilities and industry in his profession were so eminent, and he so known and beloved by persons of quality, that within the first year of his entering into sacred orders, he had fourteen advowsons of several benefices presented to him.—*Walton.*

Donne, not first, but greatest of the line  
Of stubborn thoughts a garland thought to twine ;  
To his fair maid brought cabalistic posies,  
And sung fair ditties of metempsychosis ;  
Twists iron pokers into true-love knots,  
Coining hard words not found in polyglots.

*H. Coleridge.*

I know Mr. Donne is a learned man, has the abilities of a learned divine, and will prove a powerful preacher ; and my desire is to prefer him that way, and in that way I will deny you nothing for him.—*K. James I.*

I have lived to be useful and comfortable to my good father-in-law, Sir George Moore, whose patience God hath been pleased to exercise with many temporal crosses ; I have maintained my own mother, whom it hath pleased God after a plentiful fortune in her younger days to bring to a great decay in her very old age. I have quieted the consciences of many who have groaned under the burden of a wounded spirit, whose prayers I hope are available for me. I cannot plead innocency of life, especially of my youth ; but I am to be judged by a merciful God, who is not willing to see what I have done amiss.—*Donne.*

None can truly know—  
Thy life and worth, but he that hath liv'd so.  
*Corbet, Bishop of Oxford.*

Widow'd invention justly doth forbear  
To come abroad, knowing thou art not there.  
*King, Bishop of Chichester.*

A man of very extensive and various knowledge.—*Johnson.*  
He abounds in false thoughts, in far-fetched sentiments, in

forced unnatural conceits. He was the corrupter of Cowley. Dryden was the first who called him a metaphysical poet. He had a considerable share of learning ; and though he entered late into orders, yet was esteemed a good divine.—*Warton*.

Donne was originally a poet ; his grandfather, on the mother's side, was Heywood the epigrammatist ; that Donne for not being understood, would perish. He esteemed him the first poet in the world for some things ; his verses of the lost *Ochadine* he had by heart, and that passage of the calm that dust and feathers did not stir, all was so quiet. He affirmed that Donne wrote all his best pieces before he was twenty-five years of age. The conceit of Donne's transformation or metempsychosis was, that he sought the soul of that apple which Eve pulled, and hereafter made it the soul of a bitch, then of a she-wolf, and so of a woman ; his general purpose was to have brought it into all the bodies of the heretics, from the soul of Cain, and at last left it in the body of Calvin. He only wrote one sheet of this, and since he was made doctor repented earnestly, and resolved to destroy all his poems.—*Ben Jonson's Conversation with Mr. Drummond, 1619.*

The greatest preacher of the seventeenth century.—*Quarterly Review*.

Do you know Donne ? I should like to have some more talk with you about him. He was one of those over-metaphysical headed men, who can find out connexions between every thing and any thing, and allowed himself at last to become a clergyman after he had (to my conviction at least) been as free and deep a speculator in morals as yourself.—*Leigh Hunt to Shelley*.

In Donne's satires when carefully inspected, there appear some flashes of wit and ingenuity ; but these totally suffocated and buried by the hardest and most uncouth expression that is anywhere to be met with.—*Hume*.

## Ben Jonson.

1574-1637.

Princeps Poetarum.—*Selden*.

You track him everywhere in their snow.<sup>1</sup>—*Dryden*.

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to Ben Jonson's imitations of the ancients.—*ED*.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school  
 To please in method, and invent by rule ;  
 His studious patience and laborious art  
 By regular approach essay'd the heart.  
 Cold approbation gave the lingering bays  
 For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise.  
 A mortal born, he met the general doom,  
 But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.—*Johnson.*

I was yesterday invited to a solemn supper by Ben Jonson, where there was good company, excellent cheer, choice wines, and jovial welcome. One thing intervened which almost spoilt the relish for the rest, that Ben begun to engross all the discourse ; to vapour extremely of himself ; and by vilifying others to magnify his own muse. 'T. Ca. buzzed me in the ear, that tho' Ben had barrelled up a great deal of knowledge, yet it seems he had not read the ethics, which, amongst other precepts of morality, forbid self-commendations, declaring it to be an ill favoured solecism in good manners.—*Howell.*

*Careless.* I am full of Oracles. I am come from Apollo.

*Ernitia.* From Apollo !

• *Careless.* From the heaven

Of my delight, where the boon Delphic god<sup>1</sup>  
 Drinks sack, and keeps his bacchanalia,  
 And has his altars and his incense smoking,  
 And speaks in sparkling prophecies ; thence I come,  
 My brains perfumed with the rich Indian vapour,  
 And heightened with conceit.—“*Marmion.*”

His parts were not so ready to run of themselves, as able to answer the spur, so that it may be truly said of him that he had an elaborate wit wrought out by his own industry. He would sit silent in learned company and suck in (besides wine) their several humours into his observation. What was ore in others he was able to refine in himself. He was paramount in the dramatic parts of poetry, and taught the stage an exact conformity to the laws of comedians. His comedies were above the Volge (which are only tickled by downright obscenity), and took not so well at the first stroke as at the rebound, when beheld the second time ; yea, they will endure reading

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<sup>1</sup> Namely, from the Apollo Club, of which Ben Jonson was a member. —  
 Ed.



so long as either ingenuity or learning are fashionable in our nation.—*Fuller*.

After that rare arch poet, Jonson, died  
The sock grew loathsome, and the buskin's pride,  
Together with the stage's glory stood,  
Each like a poor and pitied widowhood.  
The cirque prophaned was, and all postures rackt;  
For men did strut and stride, and stare, not act;  
Then temper flew from words, and men did squeak,  
Look red, and blow, and bluster—but not speak.  
No holy rage or frantick fires did stir  
Or flash about the spacious theatre;  
No clap of hand, or shout, or praise's proof  
Did crack the play-house sides, or cleave her roof:  
Artless the scene was, and that monstrous Sin  
Of deep and arrant Ignorance came in—  
Such ignorance as theirs was who once hiss'd  
At thy unequall'd play, the Alchymist:  
O fie upon them! Lastly too, all wit  
In utter darkness did and still will sit,  
Sleeping the luckless age out—till that she  
Her resurrection has again with thee.—*Herrick*.

He did a little too much romanize our tongue.—*Dryden*.

'Tis known you can do well,  
And that you do excel  
As a translator; but when things require  
A genius and fire,  
Not kindled heretofore by others' pains  
As oft you've wanted brains  
And art to strike the white  
As you have levell'd right;  
Yet if men vouch not things apocryphal,  
You bellow, rave, and spatter round your gall.

*Editham*.

In ancient learning train'd,  
His rigid judgment fancy's flight restrained;  
Correctly prun'd each wild luxuriant thought,  
Mark'd out her course, nor spar'd a glorious fault.  
The book of man he read with nicest art,  
And ransack'd all the secrets of the heart.

His comic humour kept the world in awe,  
And laughter frightened folly more than law.

*Churchill.*

He would many times exceed in drink ; Canary was his beloved liquor ; he then would tumble home to bed ; and when he had thoroughly perspired, then to study.—*Aubrey.*

He was not equal to his companions in tragedy, but he was superior to them, and perhaps to all others, in his terse, shrewd, sterling, vigorous comic scenes. He had a faculty between wit and humour (but more nearly allied to the latter) which has not been surpassed. His strokes were sometimes as subtle as Shakspeare's, but his arrowy wit was not feathered. His humour was scarcely so broad and obvious as Fletcher's, but it was more reaching and equally true.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1823.

Jonson possessed all the learning that was wanting to Shakspeare, and wanted all the genius which the other possessed. Both of them were equally deficient in taste and elegance, in harmony and correctness. A servile copyist of the ancients, Jonson translated into bad English the beautiful passages of the Greek and Roman authors without accommodating them to the manners of his age and country. His merit has been totally eclipsed by that of Shakspeare, whose rude genius prevailed over the rude art of his contemporary.—*David Hume.*

## Robert Burton.

1576-1639.

Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" is a valuable book. It is perhaps overloaded with quotation ; but there is a great spirit and a great power in what Burton says, when he writes from his own mind. It is the only book that ever took me out of bed two hours sooner than I wished to rise.—*Johnson.*

The book in my opinion most useful to a man who wishes to acquire the reputation of being well read, with the least trouble, is "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy," the most amusing and instructive medley of quotations and classical anecdotes I ever perused. But a superficial reader must take care, or his intricacies will bewilder him. If, however, he has patience to go through his volumes, he will be more improved for literary conversation than by the perusal of any twenty

other works with which I am acquainted—at least° in the English language.—*Byron.*

The mosaic brain of old Burton—*Carlyle.*

I mention the author to you as the pleasantest, the most learned, and the most full of sterling sense. The wits of Queen Anne's reign, and the beginning of George the First, were not a little beholden to him.—*Arch. Herring.*

## John Selden.

1584–1654.

Mr. Selden was a person whom no character can flatter or transmit in any expressions equal to his merit and virtue. He was of so stupendous learning in all kinds and in all languages (as may appear in his excellent and transcendant writings), that a man would have thought he had been entirely conversant amongst books, and had never spent an hour but in reading and writing. Yet his humanity, courtesy, and affability was such that he would have been thought to have been bred in the best courts, but that his good nature, charity, and delight in doing good and in communicating all he knew exceeded that breeding. His style in all his writings seems harsh and obscure, which is not to be wholly imputed to the abstruse subjects of which he commonly treated, out of the paths trod by other men, but to a little undervaluing the beauty of a style and too much propensity to the language of antiquity. But in his conversation he was the most clear discourser, and had the best faculty in making hard things easy and presenting them to the understanding of any man that hath been known. Mr. Hyde was wont to say that he valued himself upon nothing more than upon having had Mr. Selden's acquaintance from the time he was very young, and held it with great delight so long as they were suffered to continue together in London; and he was very much troubled always when he heard him blamed, censured, and reproached, for staying in London, and in the Parliament after they were in Rebellion, and in the worst times, which his age obliged him to do. And how wicked soever the actions were which were every day done, he was confident he had not given his consent to them, but would have hindered them if he could with his own safety, to which he was always enough indulgent. If he had some infirmities with other men, they were weighed

down with wonderful and prodigious abilities and excellencies in the other scale.—*E. Hyde, Lord Clarendon.*

He (Sir Matthew Hale) oft professed to me that Mr. Selden was a resolved serious Christian, and that he was a great adversary to Hobbes his errors.—*Rev. Richard Baxter.*

Our learned Selden before he died sent for the Most Reverend Archbishop Usher and the Reverend Dr. Langbaine, and discoursed to them of this purpose: That he had survey'd most part of the Learning that was among the sons of men; that he had his study full of books and papers of most subjects in the world; yet at that time he could not recollect any passage out of infinite books and manuscripts he was master of wherein he could rest his soul, save out of the Holy Scriptures: wherein the most remarkable passage that lay most upon his spirit was Titus ii. 11, 12, 13, 14.—*G. Berkeley, Earl of Berkeley.*

Who studies ancient laws and rites,  
Tongues, arts, and arms, and history,  
Must drudge, like Selden, day and night,  
And in the endless labour die.—*Bentley.*

Walked a good while in the Temple church, observing the plainness of Selden's tomb, and how much better one of his executors hath, who is buried by him.—*Pepys, 1667.*

John Selden is the Champion of Human Law. It fell to his lot to live in a time when the life of England was convulsed for years together without precedent; when men searched after the ultimate and essential conditions and frames of human society; when each strove fiercely for his rights, and then as dogmatically asserted them. Amidst immense, preposterous and inflated assumption; through the horrid Tyranny of the system of the Thorough; in the exciting debates of Parliament; in all the storm of the Civil War; in the still fiercer jarring of religious sects; amidst all the phenomena of that age Selden clung to the "Law of Kingdom." "All is as the State pleases." He advocates the supremacy of human law against the so-called doctrine of divine right.—*Edward Arber.*

## Beaumont and Fletcher.

1585-1615; 1576-1625.

In the elder English dramatists, and mainly in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, there is a constant recognition of

gentility, as if a noble behaviour were as easily marked in the society of their age as colour is in our American population. When any Rodrigo, Pedro, or Valerio enters, though he be a stranger, the Duke or Governor exclaims, "This is a gentleman," and proffers civilities without end; but all the rest are slag or refuse. In harmony with this delight in personal advantages, there is in their plays a certain heroic cast of character and dialogue—as in "Bonduca," "Sophocles," "The Mad Lover," "The Double Marriage"—wherein the speaker is so earnest and cordial, and on such deep grounds of character that the dialogue on the slightest additional incident in the plot rises naturally into poetry.—*Emerson.*

In easy dialogue is Fletcher's praise,  
He moved the mind, but had not power to raise.—*Dryden.*

Their songs are strikingly illustrative of a peculiarity that has often struck me in reading the dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher; the absence of any mark of antiquity, either in the diction or the construction. Hardly anything in their verse smacks of the age. They were contemporary with Ben Jonson, and yet how rugged is his English compared with their fluent and courtly tongue! They were almost contemporary with a greater than he—a greater far than any or all, and yet Shakespeare's blank verse has an antique sound when read after theirs. Dryden, himself so perfect a model as regards style, says in one of those masterpieces of criticism, the prefaces to his plays, that in Beaumont and Fletcher our language has attained to its perfection.—*M. R. Mitford.*

The comic talents of these authors far exceeded their skill in tragedy. In comedy they founded a new school, at least in England, the vestiges of which are still to be traced in our theatre. Their plays are at once distinguishable from those of their contemporaries by the regard to dramatic effect, which influenced the writers' imagination. Though not personally connected with the stage they had its picture ever before their eyes. Hence their incidents are numerous and striking, their characters sometimes slightly sketched, not drawn, like those of Jonson, from a preconceived design, but preserving that degree of individual distinctness which a common audience requires, and often highly humorous without extravagance; their language brilliant with wit; their measure, though they

do not make great use of prose, very lax and rapid, running frequently to lines of thirteen and fourteen syllables.<sup>1</sup> Few of their comedies are without a mixture of grave sentiments or elevated characters; and though there is much to condemn in their indecency and even licentiousness of principle, they never descend to the coarse buffoonery not unfrequent in their age. Never were dramatic poets more thoroughly gentlemen according to the standard of their times; and when we consider the court of James I. we may say that they were above that standard.—*Hallam*.

If we may believe the portraits of Fletcher, there was something flushed and sanguine in his personal complexion. His eye had a fiery and eager look; his hair inclined to red; and his whole appearance is restless, and, without being heavy, is plethoric. And his verse is like himself. It is flushed and full of animal spirit. It had as much of this as Marlow's had; but there is not the same extravagance and scarcely the same power which is to be found in the verse of the elder dramatist. Fletcher, however, had a great deal of humour and a great deal of sprightliness. There is a buoyancy in his language that is never perceptible in Massinger, nor even in the shrewder scenes of Ben Jonson.—*Lord Jeffrey*.

There was a wonderful similarity between Mr. Francis Beaumont and Mr. John Fletcher, which caused that clearness of friendship between them. I have heard Dr. John Earle, since Bishop of Sarum, say, who knew them, that his (Beaumont's) business was to correct the superflowings of Mr. Fletcher's wit. They lived together on the Bankside, not far from the playhouse; both bachelors, had one bench of the house between them, which they did so admire; the same cloathes, cloaks, &c., between them.—*Aubrey*.

Excellent Beaumont, in the foremost rank  
Of the rar'st wits!—*Heywood*.

Francis Beaumont too much loved himself and his own verses.—*Jonson*.

Beaumont and Fletcher changed the domain of tragedy into fairy land—turned all its terrors and its sorrows "to favour and to prettiness"—shed the rainbow hues of sportive fancy with

<sup>1</sup> Ben Jonson's blank verse is very masterly and individual, and perhaps Massinger's is even still nobler. In Beaumont and Fletcher it is constantly slipping into lyricisms.—*Coleridge's "Table Talk."*

equal hand among tyrants and victims, the devoted and the faithless, suffering and joy ; and invoked the remorse of a moment to change them as with a harlequin's wand ; unrealized the terrible, and left " nothing serious in mortality ; " but reduced the struggle of life to a glittering and heroic game, to be played splendidly out and quitted without a sigh.—*Talfourd.*

They are not safe teachers of morality ; they tamper with it like an experiment in *corpore vili*. . . The tone of Shakspeare's writings is manly and bracing ; theirs is at once insipid and meretricious in the comparison.—*Hazlitt.*

### Philip Massinger.

1585-1639.

Massinger seldom rises to any pitch of sublimity, and yet it must be owned is never so incorrigibly absurd as his predecessor (Shakspeare). His performances are all crowded with incident but want character, the genuine mark of genius in a dramatic poet.—*Goldsmith.*

Massinger as a tragic writer appears to me second only to Shakspeare ; in the higher comedy I can hardly think him inferior to Jonson. In wit and sprightly dialogue, as well as in knowledge of theatrical effect, he falls very much below Fletcher. These, however, are the great names of the English stage.—*Hallam.*

When Fox was a young man a copy of Massinger once fell into his hands ; he read it, and for some time after could talk of nothing but Massinger.—*Sam. Rogers.*

His muse has been celebrated for its flow, we believe by Dr. Ferriar ; but we cannot, we confess, perceive much beauty in it. It is not rugged and harsh, but it wants music nevertheless ; it runs in a tolerably regular current, but it has seldom any felicitous modulations. Massinger himself has not much of the fluctuations of genius. He is less accessible to passion than Fletcher and others, and is not often either very elevated or very profound. His imagination does not soar like Marlow's, nor penetrate like the dark subtle power of Webster. He has strength however, and sometimes great majesty of diction. He builds up a character to a stately height, although he does not often endow it with the turns and vacillations of humanity.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1823.

## John Webster.

1585-1654.

He was a man of truly original genius, and seems to have felt strong pleasure in the strange and fantastic horrors that rose up from the dark abyss of his imagination. The vices and the crimes which he delights to paint all partake of an extravagance, which nevertheless makes them impressive and terrible; and in the retribution and the punishment there is a character of corresponding wildness.—*Henry Mackenzie*.

Among English plays, Shelley was a great admirer of the "Duchess of Malfi," and thought the dungeon scene, where she takes her executioners for allegorical personages of torture and murder, or some such grim personifications, as equal to anything in Shakspeare.—"*Life of Shelley*."

Webster was an unequal writer, full of gloomy power, but with touches of profound sentiment and the deepest pathos. His imagination rioted upon the grave, and frenzy and murder and "loathed melancholy" were in his dreams. A common calamity was beneath him, and ordinary vengeance was too trivial for his muse. His pen distilled blood; and he was familiar with the hospital and the charnel-house, and racked his brain to outvie the horrors of both. His visions were not of heaven nor of the air; but they came dusky and earthy from the tomb; and the madhouse emptied its cells to do justice to the closing of his fearful stories.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1823.

## Bishop Sanderson.

1587-1663.

Reason and learning, piety and faith, loyalty and liberty, together with conscience and candour, all meet together in his profoundly cultured mind.—*R. Montgomery*.<sup>1</sup>

His style as a writer is occasionally stiff and involved, harsh in its allusions, and interspersed largely with learned quotations.—*Church of England Quarterly Review*.

I carry my ears to hear other preachers, but my conscience to hear Sanderson.—*Charles I*.

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<sup>1</sup> Author of "Satan," &c. See Macaulay's "Essays."



His learning was methodical and exact, his wisdom useful, his integrity visible, and his whole life so unspotted, that all ought to be preserved as copies for posterity to write after ; the clergy especially, who with impure hands ought not to offer sacrifice to that God, whose pure eyes abhor iniquity.—*Walton.*

His judgment was so much superior to his fancy, that whatsoever this suggested, that disliked and controlled ; still considering and reconsidering, till his time was so wasted, that he was forced to write, not, probably what was best, but what he thought best.—*Dr. Sheldon.*

And here I do profess that as I have lived, so I desire and (by the grace of God) resolve to die in the communion of the Catholic Church of Christ, and a true son of the Church of England ; which as it stands by law established to be both in doctrine and worship agreeable to the Word of God, and in the most, and most material points of both, conformable to the faith and practice of the godly churches of Christ in the primitive and purer times, I do firmly believe : led so to do, not so much from the force of custom and education (to which the greatest part of mankind owe their different persuasions in points of religion) as upon the clear evidence of truth and reason, after a serious and impartial examination of the grounds as well of popery as puritanism, according to that measure of understanding, and those opportunities which God had afforded me.—*Sanderson.*

## Thomas Hobbes.

1588-1679.

His main principles were that all men acted under an absolute necessity, in which he seemed protected by the then received doctrine of absolute decrees. He seemed to think that the universe was God, and that souls were material ; thought being only subtil and imperceptible motion. He thought interest and fear were the chief principles of society ; and he put all morality in the following, that which was our own private will and advantage. He thought religion had no other foundation than the laws of the land. And he put all the law in the will of the Prince or of the People ; for he writ his book at first in favour of absolute monarchy, but turned it afterwards to gratify the republican party.—*Burnet.*

While in dark ignorance we lay afraid  
Of fancies, ghosts, and every empty shade,  
Great Hobbes appear'd, and by plain reason's light  
Put such fantastic forms to shameful flight.

*Duke of Buckingham.*

The old anarch Hobbes.—*Sydney Smith.*

Thomas Hobbes had in language more precise and luminous than had ever been employed by any other metaphysical writer, maintained that the will of the prince was the standard of right and wrong, and that every subject ought to be ready to embrace Popery, Mahomedanism, or Paganism, at the royal command. Thousands who were incompetent to appreciate what was really valuable in his metaphysical speculations, eagerly welcomed a theory which, while it exalted the kingly office, relaxed the obligations of morality and degraded religion into a mere affair of state. Hobbism soon became almost an essential part of the character of a fine gentleman.—*Macaulay.*

Hobbes saw with astonishing rapidity of intuition, some of the simplest and most general facts which may be observed in the operations of the understanding ; and perhaps no man ever possessed the same faculty of conveying his abstract speculations in language of such clearness, precision, and force, as to engrave them on the mind of the reader. But he did not wait to examine whether there might not be other facts equally general relating to the intellectual powers ; and he therefore “took too little from a great many things.” He fell into the double error of hastily applying his general laws to the most complicated processes of thought, without considering whether these general laws were not themselves limited by other not less comprehensive laws, and without trying to discover how they were connected with particulars, by a scale of intermediate and secondary laws.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1821.

From (Lucretius') time to ours I know none so like him as our poet and philosopher of Malmesbury.—*Dryden.*

No English author in that age was more celebrated, both abroad and at home, than Hobbes. In our time he is much neglected ; a lively instance how precarious all reputations founded on reasoning and philosophy ! A pleasant comedy which paints the manners of the age and exposes a faithful picture of nature is a durable work, and is transmitted to the latest posterity. But a system, whether physical or metaphysical, commonly owes its success to its novelty ; and is no

sooner canvassed with impartiality than its weakness is discovered. Hobbes's politics are fitted only to promote tyranny, and his ethics to encourage licentiousness. Though an enemy to religion, he partakes nothing of the spirit of scepticism ; but is as positive and dogmatical as if human reason, and his reason in particular, could obtain a thorough conviction in these subjects. Clearness and propriety of style are the chief excellencies of Hobbes's writings. In his own person he is represented to have been a man of virtue, a character nowise surprising, notwithstanding his libertine system of ethics. Timidity is the principal fault with which he is reproached. He lived to an extreme old age, yet could never reconcile himself to the thoughts of death.—*Hume*, "*History of England*."

Hobbes defines laughter to be a sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with infirmity of others or our own former infirmity. Taking the language of Hobbes to mean the sudden discovery of any inferiority, it will be very easy to show that such is *not* the explanation of that laughter excited by humour ; for I may discover suddenly that a person has lost half-a-crown, or that his tooth aches, or that his house is not so well built, or his coat not so well made as mine, and yet none of these discoveries give me the slightest sensation of the humorous.—*Sydney Smith*.

To my bookseller for Hobbes's "*Leviathan*," which is now mightily called for ; and what was heretofore sold for 8s. I now give 24s. at the second-hand, and is sold for 30s., it being a book the bishops will not let be printed again.—*Pepys*, 1668.

## Robert Herrick.

1591-1674.

Herrick is the most joyous and gladsome of bards ; singing like the grasshopper as if he would never grow old. He is as fresh as the spring, as blythe as summer, and as ripe as autumn. We know of no English poet who is so completely *abandonné*, as the French term it, who so wholly gives himself up to his present feelings, who is so much heart and soul in what he writes. The spirit of song dances in his veins, and flutters around his lips—now bursting into the joyful and hearty voice of the Epicurean, sometimes breathing forth strains "soft as the sigh of buried love," and sometimes

uttering feelings of the most delicate pensiveness. His poems resemble a luxuriant meadow full of kingcups and wild flowers, or a July firmament sparkling with a myriad of stars. His fancy fed upon the fair and sweet things of nature; it is redolent of roses and jessamine; it is as light and airy as the thistledown, or the bubbles which laughing boys blow into the air, where they float into a waving line of beauty.—*Sir E. Brydges*.<sup>1</sup>

Herrick has passages where the thoughts seem to dance into numbers from his very heart, and where he frolics like a being made up of melody and pleasure.—*Thomas Campbell*.

We have lately seen the whole of Herrick's poems republished, a coarse-minded and beastly writer, whose dunghill, when the few flowers that grew therein had been transplanted, ought never to have been disturbed. Those flowers are indeed beautiful and perennial; but they should have been removed from the filth and ordure in which they are embedded.—*R. Southey*.

## Isaak Walton.

1593–1683.

### ON THE "COMPLETE ANGLER."

This book is so like you, and you like it,  
For harmless worth, expression, art, and wit,  
That I protest, ingenuously 'tis true,  
I love this mirth, art, wit, the book, and you.—*Rob. Floud*.

In this volume of the "Complete Angler," which will be always read with avidity even by those who entertain no strong relish

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<sup>1</sup> No man was more laughed at in his day than Sir Egerton Brydges; no man deserves kinder treatment at the hands of posterity. His numerous works exhibit a wide extent of knowledge; his novels are constructed with great ingenuity, and written in a diction eminently beautiful and eloquent. His poetry is far from mediocre; but of his compositions undoubtedly the very best is his autobiography. His candour is inexpressibly charming. He writes with a freedom and power that often raise his language to the level of De Quincey's noblest passages. Though disappointed in his own ambition he is utterly destitute of prejudice and envy. He asserts the merits of a writer with the exultation of a man who has a personal and vital interest in the success of what or whom he praises. He must be allowed a conspicuous place in that confederation of genius and talent which liberated English letters from the dismal thralldom of the eighteenth century.—*ED.*

for the art which it professes to teach, we discover a copious vein of innocent pleasantry and good humour. The dialogue is diversified with all the characteristic beauties of colloquial composition. The songs and little poems which are occasionally inserted will abundantly gratify the reader who has a taste for the charms of pastoral poetry. Above all, those lovely lessons of religious and moral instruction, which are so repeatedly inculcated throughout the whole work, will ever recommend this exquisitely pleasing performance.—*Dr. T. Zouch.*

One who, with the soundest judgment, possessed a sweetness of expression ever inclining to the bright side of things; a veracity not to be questioned, and a felicity of expression peculiarly his own.—*J. Major.*

I have the happiness to know his person, and to be intimately acquainted with him, and in him to know the worthiest man, and to enjoy the best and the truest friend any man ever had.—*Cotton.*

He (Johnson) talked of Isaac Walton's "Lives," which was one of his most favourite books. Dr. Donne's life, he said, was one of the most perfect of them. He observed "that it was wonderful that Walton, who was in a very low situation of life, should have been familiarly received by so many great men, and that at a time when the ranks of society were kept more separate than they are now. He supposed that Walton had then given up his business as a linendraper and sempster, and was only an author;" and added that "he was a great panegyrist."—*Boswell.*

Meek Walton's heavenly memory.—*Wordsworth.*

The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet

Should have a hook and a small trout to pull it.—*Byron.*

Whether we consider the elegant simplicity of the style (of the "Complete Angler"), the ease and unaffected humour of the dialogue, the lovely scenes which it delineates, the enchanting pastoral poetry which it contains, or the fine morality it so sweetly inculcates, it has hardly its fellow in any of the modern languages.—*Sir John Hawkins.*

•  
George Herbert.

1593-1632.

That model of a man, a gentleman, and a clergyman.—*Coleridge*.

The quaintness of some of his thoughts (not of his diction, than which nothing can be more pure, manly, and unaffected) has blinded modern readers to the general merit of his poems, which are for the most part exquisite in their kind.—*Ibid*.

The fashion of false wit was revived by several poets of the last age, and in particular may be met with among Mr. Herbert's poems.—*Addison*.

I have too thoughtful a wit ; a wit like a penknife in too narrow a sheath, too sharp for my body.—*Herbert*.

Some of the meaner sort of his parish did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert, that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's saints'-bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him ; and would then return back to their plough. And his most holy life was such, that it begot such reverence to God and to him, that they thought themselves the happier when they carried Mr. Herbert's blessing back with them to their labour. Thus powerful was his reason and example to persuade others to a practical piety and devotion.—*Walton*.

There was in it (*i.e.*, "The Temple") the picture of a divine soul in every page ; and the whole book was such a harmony of holy passions as would enrich the world with pleasure and piety.—*Farrer*.

Neither their intrinsic excellence, nor the authority of those who can judge of it, will ever make the poems of George Herbert popular in the sense in which Scott and Byron are popular, because it is to the vulgar a labour instead of a pleasure to read them ; and there are parts in them which to such judges cannot but be vapid or ridiculous.—*Ruskin*.

A devout earnestness gave elevation to George Herbert's conceits.—*Prof. Morley*

James Howell.

1595-1666.

He may be called the prodigie of his age for the variety of his volumes . . . in all his writings there is something still

new, either in the matter, method, or fancy, and in an untrodden tract. Moreover, one may discover a kinde of vein of *poesie* to run through the body of his prose, in the continuity and succinctness thereof all along.—*Peter Fisher*.

He had a singular command of his pen whether in prose or verse, and was well read in modern histories, especially in those of the countries wherein he had travelled, had a parabolical and allusive fancy, according to his motto, *Senesco non Segnesco*. But the reader is to know that his writings having been only to gain a livelihood, and by their dedications to flatter great and noble persons, are very trite and empty, stolen from other authors without acknowledgment, and fitted only to please the humours of novices.—*Anthony à Wood*.

He is one of the earliest instances of a man successfully maintaining himself with the fruits of his pen.—*Edward Arber*.

Howell, the author of "Familiar Letters," &c., wrote the chief part of them, and almost all his other works, during his long confinement in the Fleet prison; some say for debts which his irregular living had occasioned, and others for political reasons. This is certain, that he used his pen for subsistence in that imprisonment, and there produced one of the most agreeable works in the English language.<sup>1</sup>—*I. D'Israeli*.

## Edmund Waller.

1605–1687.

A poet who addresses his pieces to living characters, and confines himself to the subjects and anecdotes of his own times, like this courtly author, bids fairer to become popular, than he that is employed in the higher scenes of poetry and fiction, which are more remote from common manners. It may be remarked, lastly, of Waller, that there is no passion in his love-verses, and that one elegy of Tibullus, so well imitated by Hammond, excels a volume of the most refined panegyric.—*Warton*.

Waller was smooth.—*Pope*.

He drank only water, and while he sat in a company

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<sup>1</sup> Of this work Sergeant-Major Peter Fisher, poet-laureate to the Protector, says, "He teacheth a new way of Epistolizing; and that 'Familiar Letters' may not only consist of words and a bombast of compliments, but that they are capable of the highest speculations and solidest kind of knowledge."

who were drinking wine, he had the dexterity to accommodate his discourse to the pitch of theirs as it sunk.—*Biographia Britannica*.

Waller was the delight of the house ; and even at eighty he said the liveliest things of any amongst them ; he was only concerned to say that which should make him be applauded. But he never laid the business of the house to heart, being a vain and empty, though a witty man. He deserves the character of being one of the great refiners of our language and poetry. He was for near sixty years one of the best of our writers that way.—*Burnet*.

There needs no more be said to extol the excellence and power of his wit, and pleasantness of his conversation, than that it was of a magnitude enough to cover a world of very great faults ; that is, so to cover them that they were not taken notice of to his reproach.—*Clarendon*.

He added something to our elegance of diction, and something to our propriety of thought.—*Johnson*.

Waller had much more than may at first sight appear in common with Bacon. To the higher intellectual English qualities of the great English philosopher, to the genius which has made an immortal epoch in the history of science, Waller had indeed no pretensions. But the mind of Waller, as far as it extended, coincided with that of Bacon, and might, so to speak, have been cut out of that of Bacon. In the qualities which make a man an object of interest and veneration to posterity, they cannot be compared together. But in the qualities by which chiefly a man is known to his contemporaries, there was a striking similarity between them. Considered as men of the world, as courtiers, as politicians, as associates, as allies, as enemies, they had nearly the same merits and the same defects. They were not malignant. They were not tyrannical. But they wanted warmth of affection and elevation of sentiment.—*Macaulay*.

Thy verse, harmonious bard, and flattering song,  
Can make the vanquish'd great, the coward strong ;  
Thy verse can show ev'n Cromwell's innocence,  
And compliment the storm that bore him hence.

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*Addison*.

If Waller differed from the Cowleyan sect of writers, he differed for the worse. He had as little poetry as they, and



much less wit ; nor is the languor of his verses less 'offensive than the ruggedness of theirs.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1828.

Let us not condemn him with untempered severity because he was not a prodigy which the world had seldom seen, because his character included not the poet, the orator, and the hero.—*Percival Stockdale*.

It is not easy to think without some contempt on an author, who is growing illustrious in his own opinion by verses at one time "To a Lady who can do Anything but Sleep when She Pleases ;" at another "To a Lady on her Passing through a Crowd of People ;" then "On a Braid of Divers Colours woven by Four Ladies ;" "On a Tree cut in Paper ;" or "A Lady from whom he received the Copy of Verses on the Paper-tree, which for many years had been Missing." Genius now and then produces a lucky trifle. We still read the "Dove" of Anacreon, and "Sparrow" of Catullus ; and a writer naturally pleases himself with a performance which owes nothing to the subject. But compositions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for something useful ; they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of short duration ; or they are blossoms to be valued only as they foretell fruit.—*Johnson*.

### Sir Thomas Browne.

1605-1682.

As Bacon seemed to bend all his thoughts to the practice of life, and to bring home the light of science "to the bosoms and businesses of men," Sir Thomas Browne seemed to be of opinion that the only business of life was to think ; and that the proper object of speculation was, by darkening knowledge, to breed more speculation and "to find no end in wandering mazes lost." He chose the incomprehensible and impracticable, as almost the only subjects fit for a lofty and lasting contemplation, or for the exercise of a solid faith. He cried out for an "Oh altitude," beyond the heights of revelation, and posed himself with apocryphal mysteries as the pastime of his leisure hours. He pushes a question to the utmost verge of conjecture, that he may repose on the certainty of doubt ; and he removes an object to the greatest distance from him, that he may take a high and abstracted interest in it, consider it in relation to the sum of things, not to himself, and bewilder his understanding in the universality of its nature, and the

inscrutableness of its origin. His is the sublime of indifference ; a passion for the abstruse and imaginary. He turns the world round for his amusement as if it was a globe of pasteboard.—*Hazlitt*.

He had of the earth such a minute and geographical knowledge, as if he had been by divine Providence ordained surveyor-general of the whole terrestrial orb.—*J. Whitefoot*.

His style strikes, but does not please ; his tropes are hard, and his combinations uncouth. . . . His innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy. . . . It is on his own writings that Browne is to depend for the esteem of posterity, of which he shall not be easily deprived while learning shall have any reverence among men.—*Dr. Johnson*.<sup>1</sup>

He was worthy to be the disciple of the sage who said "man was born to contemplate." His pages are filled with a lofty and ideal morality, and his maxims are bright with luminous, if with unconnected truths. In some respects he was among the prose writers of that day what Wordsworth is among the poets of this—dedicating even the familiar to the beautiful, and not disdaining to "suck divinity from the flowers of nature." He cannot allow ugliness to a toad or a bear—and "even that vulgar and tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in him a deep fit of devotion, and a profound contemplation of the First Composer. There is in it a hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world and creatures of God—such a melody to the ear as the whole world, well understood, would afford the understanding." It is from such hints and suggestions of thought that Browne, as Wordsworth, plumes his wings, and raises himself beyond "the visible diurnal sphere." A temperament somewhat common to both, was in both fed by similar political tenets and theological veneration ; apart from the anxious and exciting cares of men who struggle actively with or against the multitude. The "*Religio Medici*" is one of the most beautiful prose poems in the language ; its power of diction, its subtlety and largeness of thought, its exquisite conceits and images, have no parallel out of the writers of that brilliant age, when Poetry and Prose have not yet divided their domain, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Such is the sing-song criticism of a man who was not only revered as the patriarch of the literature of his day, but obeyed as the dictator.—*ED.*

## 64 *Sir Thomas Browne—Sir William Davenant.*

Lyceum of Philosophy was watered by the Ilissus of the Nine.—*Lord Jeffrey.*

### Sir William Davenant.

1606–1668.

Read a few pages of Will D'Avenant, who was fond of having it supposed that Shakspeare intrigued with his mother. I think the pretension can only be treated as Phæton was, according to Fielding's farce :—

Besides, by all the village boys I'm shamed,  
You, the sun's son, you rascal? you be damn'd !

*Sir Walter Scott.*

The scenic decoration of the age of Charles II. was introduced by Sir William Davenant at the Restoration. Sir William had imbibed a passion for the Italian system. This, there can be no doubt, was very alien to the comparative simplicity of the Shakspearian stage. The theatre of the age of Elizabeth, though not like that of Athens, open to the sky, was more frequently open to the natural light. Scenic representations usually took place by day. Now, it certainly appears to be an inconsistency in the abstract, that those who disparage the plays of Dryden for an alleged approximation to the imitative drama of France, should applaud the drama of the sixteenth century for a similar approximation to the scenic arrangements of the Athenian stage. Such arrangements might afford greater scope for the development of histrionic art ; but they would not therefore necessarily conduce to a more vivid representation of life. The inference is to the contrary ; since the decorations of Davenant were deemed essential in an age which possessed the most celebrated actors.—*Edin. Review*, 1855.

### John Milton.

1608–1674.

"If you scruple to give the title of an epic poem to the "Paradise Lost" of Milton, call it, if you choose, a Divine poem ; give it whatever name you please, provided you confess that it is a work as admirable in its kind as the "Iliad."—*Addison.*

Undoubtedly "Paradise Lost" is one of the greatest, most

noble, and most sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced.—*Dryden*.

Milton, madam, was a genius that could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones.<sup>1</sup>—*Johnson*.

One of the greatest and most daring genius's that has appear'd in the world, and who has made his country a glorious present of the most lofty but most irregular poem that has been produc'd by the mind of man. That great man had a desire to give the world something like an Epick Poem; but he resolv'd at the same time to break thro' the rules of Aristotle. . . . Milton was the first who in the space of almost 4000 years resolv'd for his country's honour and his own, to present the world with an original poem: that is to say, a poem that should have his own thoughts, his own images, and his own spirit.—

*John Dennis*.

. . . Much admired by all at home for the poems he writ, tho' he was then blind; chiefly that of "Paradise Lost," in which there is a nobleness both of contrivance and execution, that, tho' he affected to write in blank verse without rhyme, and made many new and rough words, yet it was esteemed the beautifullest and perfectest poem that ever was writ, at least in our language.—*Burnet*.

I began thus far to assent . . . to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die.—*Milton*.

We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, be it ever remembered, a republican and a bold inquirer into morals and religion.—*Shelley*.

I should much commend the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to you I have seen yet nothing parallel in our language.—*Sir Henry Wotton*.

The sight of his book, the sound of his name, are pleasant to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits and flowers

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<sup>1</sup> In reply to Hannah More having expressed a "wonder that the poet who had written 'Paradise Lost' should write such poor sonnets."—ED.

which the Virgin Martyr of Massinger sent down from the gardens of Paradise to the earth, and which were distinguished from the production of the soils, not only by superior bloom and sweetness, but by miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful, not only to delight, but to elevate and purify.—*Macaulay.*

Milton is indeed an august example of the aspiration to self-completion, not only as to scope and strength, but as to ornament and grace. In the tastes and characteristics of his youth, this severe republican, who has come down to the vulgar gaze in colours so stern though so sublime, rather presents to us the idealized image of the Elizabethan cavalier. Philip Sydney himself was not more the type of the all-accomplished and consummate gentleman. Beautiful in person—courtly in address—skilled in the gallant exercise of arms—a master of each manlier as each softer art—versed in music—in song—in the languages of Europe—the admired gallant of the dames and nobles of Italy—the cynosure of all eyes that “rained influence and adjudged”—he, the destined Dante of England, was rather in his youth the brilliant personification of the mythical Crichton.—*Lord Lytton.*

The old blind schoolmaster hath published a tedious poem on the Fall of Man. If its length be not considered as merit it hath no other.—*Waller.*

This man cuts us all out and the ancients too.—*Dryden.*

Reading Milton is like dining off gold plate in a company of kings; very splendid, very ceremonious, and not a little appalling. Him I read but seldom, and only in high days and festivals of the spirit. Him I never lay down without feeling my appreciation increased for lesser men—never without the same kind of comfort that one returning from the presence feels when he doffs respectful attitude and dress of armoury, and subsides into old coat, familiar arm-chair and slippers. After a long-continued organ music, the jangle of the Jew's harp is felt as an exquisite relief.—*A. Smith.*

His soul was like a star and dwelt apart.—*Wordsworth.*

The mighty orb of song.—*Ibid.*

Milton's strong pinion now not heaven can bound,  
Now serpent-like, in prose he sweeps the ground;  
In quibbles, angel and archangel join,  
And God the Father turns a school divine.—*Pope.*

The poems of Milton betray a narrowness of education and

a degeneracy of habit. His theological quibbles and perplexed speculations are daily equalled and excelled by the most abject enthusiasts; and if we consider him as a prose writer, he has neither the learning of a scholar nor the manners of a gentleman. There is no force in his reasonings, no eloquence in his style, and no taste in his composition.—*Goldsmith*.

It is owing in part to his blindness, but more perhaps to his general residence in a city, that Milton, in the words of Coleridge, is "not a picturesque but a musical poet;" or, as I would prefer to say, is the latter more of the two. He describes visible things, and often with great powers of rendering them manifest, what the Greeks called *ἐνάργεια*, though seldom with so much circumstantial exactness of observation as Spenser or Dante; but he feels music. The sense of vision delighted his imagination, but that of sound wrapped his whole soul in ecstasy. One of his trifling faults may be connected with this, the excessive passion he displays for stringing together sonorous names, sometimes so obscure that the reader associates nothing with them, as the word "Namancos" in "Lycidas," which long baffled his commentators.—*Hallam*.

There was a period of his life when Fox used to say that he could not forgive Milton for having occasioned him the trouble of reading through a poem ("Paradise Lost"), three parts of which were not worth reading. He afterwards, however, estimated it more justly. Milton's prose works he never could endure.<sup>1</sup>—*Samuel Rogers*.

It is certain that this author, when in a happy mood, and employed on a noble subject, is the most wonderfully sublime of any poet in any language: Homer, and Lucretius, and Tasso not excepted.—*Hume*, "*History of England*."

## Lord Clarendon.

1608–1674.

The character of Lord Chancellor Clarendon seems to grow every day brighter the more it is scrutinized, and his integrity and abilities are more ascertained and acknowledged, even

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<sup>1</sup> Horne Tooke, on the contrary, was such a passionate admirer of Milton's prose works, that, as he assured Rogers, he had transcribed them all in his youth.—*Ed.*

from the publication of private papers never intended to see the light.—*Warton.*

He himself has left us more lasting memorials of his existence than marble or brass could furnish ; and he certainly is a memorable personage in our annals, both by his actions and his writings. Without the original genius and comprehensive grasp of intellect which distinguished his predecessor Bacon, he had an acute and vigorous understanding, which, united with unwearied industry, made him a man of most respectable acquirements, and admirably adapted him for the scenes through which he was to pass. In ordinary times he would have been known during his life merely to his own family, his personal friends, and his profession, and would have been forgotten as soon as the tomb had closed over him ; but amidst civil strife and revolutions, he was qualified to take a leading part, and to influence the opinions and the conduct of mankind. For delicacy of observation and felicity of delineation of the characters of contemporaries, he is almost without a rival.—*Lord Campbell.*

The Earl of Clarendon was a good Chancellor, only a little too rough, but very impartial in the administration of justice. He never seemed to understand foreign affairs well ; and yet he meddled too much in them. He had too much levity in his wit, and did not always observe the decorum of his post. He was high, and was apt to reject with too much contempt those who addressed themselves to him. He had such a regard to the king, that when places were disposed of, even otherwise than as he advised, yet he would justify what the king did, and disparage the intention of others, not without much scorn ; which created him many enemies. He was indefatigable in business, tho' the gout did often disable him from waiting on the king ; yet, during his credit, the king came constantly to him when he was laid up by it.—*Burnet.*

You are quite right to read Clarendon—his style is a little long-winded ; but, on the other hand, his characters may match those of the other historians, and one thinks one would know the very men were one to meet them in society. Few English writers have the same precision either in describing the actors in great scenes, or the deeds which they performed.—*Sir Walter Scott.*

No man wrote abler State-papers. No man spoke with more weight and dignity in council and in Parliament. No man

was better acquainted with general maxims of state-craft. No man observed the varieties of character with a more discriminating eye. It must be added that he had a strong sense of religious and moral obligation, a sincere reverence for the laws of his country, and a conscientious regard for the honour and interest of the crown. But his temper was sour, arrogant, and impatient of contradiction. Above all, he had long been an exile; and this circumstance alone would have disqualified him for the supreme direction of affairs.—*Macaulay*.

Hume alludes to Clarendon as the great contemporary authority, in terms which every delighted student must wish to adopt. Hume certainly would not have been justified in casting a stone at any one upon the score of historical dishonesty; but the unfairness of the noble historian is a taint that spreads so far, and under circumstances so inexcusable, that we can truly say there are few delusions of which it has been so painful and discouraging to us to be disabused, as that under which we once fancied Clarendon a sort of English Sully.—*Edinburgh Review*.

Clarendon will always be esteemed an entertaining writer, even independent of our curiosity to know the facts which he relates. His style is prolix and redundant, and suffocates us by the length of its periods; but it discovers imagination and sentiment, and pleases us at the same time that we disapprove of it. He is more partial in appearance than in reality; for he seems perpetually anxious to apologise for the king; but his apologies are often well grounded. He is less partial in his relation of facts than in his account of characters; he was too honest a man to falsify the former; his affections were easily capable, unknown to himself, of disguising the latter. An air of probity and goodness runs through the whole work, as these qualities did in reality embellish the whole life of the author.—*Hume*.

Able rather than wise; obsequious, though aspiring; well aware of the oppressions under which the nation was suffering, yet courting its oppressors:—it is difficult to reconcile the easiness of his unconcern with much public virtue, or his ignorance of the resistance which was already all but knocking at the door, with any portion of that knowledge of human nature of which his writings appear so full.—“*Life of Clarendon*.”

No one who regards with attachment the present system of the English constitution can look upon him as an excellent



minister or a friend to the soundest principles of civil and religious liberty. . . He dares very frequently to say what is not true, and what he must have known to be otherwise ; he does not dare to say what is true. And it is almost an aggravation of this reproach, that he aimed to deceive posterity, and poisoned at the fountain a stream from which another generation was to drink. No defence has ever been set up for the fidelity of Clarendon's history ; nor can men, who have sifted the authentic materials, entertain much difference of judgment in this respect ; though as a monument of powerful ability and impressive eloquence, it will always be read with that delight which we receive from many great historians, especially the ancient, independent of any confidence in their veracity.—*Hallam.*

I am reading Clarendon, but scarcely get on faster than you did with your "Charles the Fifth." I think the style bad, and that he has a good deal of the old woman in his way of thinking ; but hate the opposite party so much that it gives one a kind of partiality for him.—*George Selwyn.*

Lord Clarendon's style is verbose, careless, and frequently even perplexed. Yet, with all these faults, there is so much life and vigour in his conceptions, and in his expression of them, and he everywhere discovers such a purity of mind and dignity of moral sentiment, that few writers in the English language give the reader more pleasure.—*Dr. Hurd.*

## Thomas Fuller.

1608-1661.

Next to Shakspeare I am not certain whether Thomas Fuller, beyond all writers, does not excite in me the sense and emotions of the marvellous ; the degree in which any given faculty, or combination of faculties, is possessed and manifested so far surpassing what one would have thought possible in a single mind, as to give one's admiration the flavour and quality of wonder.—*Coleridge.*

Fuller is one of the few voluminous authors who is never tedious. No matter where we pitch we are sure to alight on something that stimulates attention. Nor do we know any author so voluminous, to which we could so fearlessly apply the *ad aperturam libri* test. Let the subject be ever so dry or barren, he is sure to surround it with some unlooked-for

felicity, or at least some entertaining oddity of thought or expression ; the most meagre matter-of-fact shall suggest either some solid reflection, or some curious inference, or some ingenious allusion, or some humorous story ; or if nothing better, some sportive alliteration or ludicrous pun. To this must be added that his reflections and his images are in general so exceedingly novel (often, it is true, far-fetched and quaint enough, but frequently very beautiful) that they surprise as well as please ; and please in a great measure by surprising us. Probably there is no author who so often breaks upon his readers with turns of thought for which they are totally unprepared ; and it would be amusing to watch the countenance of any intelligent man whilst perusing his pages.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1842.

Through the whole of his church history he is so fond of his own wit, that he does not seem to have minded what he was about. The gravity of an historian (much more of an ecclesiastical one) requires a far greater care, both of the matter and style of his work than is here to be met with. If a pretty story comes in his way that affords scope for clinch and droll, off it goes with all the gaiety of the stage, without staying to inquire whether it have any truth or not ; and even the most serious and authentic parts of it are so interlaced with pun and quibble, that it looks as if the man had designed to ridicule the annals of our church into fable and romance.—*Bishop Nicholson*.

He was in the habit of writing the first words of every line near the margin down to the foot of the paper, and, then beginning again, he filled up the vacuities exactly, without spaces, interlineations, or contractions ; and he would so connect the ends and beginnings that the sense would appear as complete as if it had been written in a continued series, after the ordinary manner.—“*Life and Writings of Thomas Fuller*.”

The writings of Fuller are usually designated by the title of quaint, and with sufficient reason ; for such was his natural bias to conceits, that I doubt not, upon most occasions, it would have been going out of his way to have expressed himself out of them. But his wit is not always *lumen siccum*, a dry faculty of surprising. On the contrary, his conceits are oftentimes deeply steeped in human feeling and passion. Above all, his way of telling a story, for its eager liveliness, and the perpetual running commentary of the narrator happily blended with the narration, is perhaps unequalled.—*Charles Lamb*.

# Samuel Butler.

1612-1680.

There is in "Hudibras" a great deal of bullion that will always last. But to be sure the highest strokes of his wit owed their force to the impression of the characters which was upon men's minds at the time, to their knowing them at table and in the street, in being familiar with them, and, above all, to his satire being directed against those whom a little while before they had hated and feared.—*Johnson*.

Of all his gains by verse he could not save  
Enough to purchase flannel and a grave.—*Oldham*.

To the Wardrobe ; hither come Mr. Battersby ; and we falling into discourse of a new book of drollery in use called "Hudebras," I would needs go find it out, and met with it at the Temple ; cost me 2s. and 6d. But when I came to read it, it is so silly an abuse of the Presbyter Knight going to the warrs, that I am ashamed of it ; and by and by meeting at Mr. Townsend's at dinner, I sold it to him for 18d.—*Pepys*.

While Butler, needy wretch, was yet alive,  
No generous patron would a dinner give.  
See him, when starv'd to death and turn'd to dust,  
Presented with a monumental bust ;  
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown :  
He ask'd for bread, and he receiv'd a stone.

*C. Wesley*.<sup>1</sup>

The reigning taste was so bad that the success of a writer was in inverse proportion to his labour and to his desire of excellence. An exception must be made for Butler, who had as much wit and learning as Cowley, and who knew, what Cowley never knew, how to use them. A great command of good homely English distinguishes him still more from the other writers of the time.—*Macaulay*.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Wesley, "a man," says Macaulay, "whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have made him eminent in literature, whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered as the highest good of his species."

No composition abounds so much as "Hudibras" in strokes of just and inimitable wit: yet are there many performances which give us great or greater entertainment on the whole perusal. The allusions in Butler are often dark and far-fetched, and though scarcely any author was ever able to express his thoughts in so few words, he often employs too many thoughts on one subject, and thereby becomes prolix after an unusual manner. It is surprising how much erudition Butler has introduced with so good a grace into a work of pleasantry and humour; "Hudibras" is perhaps one of the most learned compositions that is to be found in any language.—*Hume*.

Mr. Wycherley had always laid hold of any opportunity which offered of representing to the Duke of Buckingham how well Mr. Butler had deserved of the Royal family, by writing his inimitable "Hudibras;" and that it was a reproach to the Court that a person of his loyalty and wit should suffer in obscurity and under the wants he did. The Duke always seemed to hearken to him with attention enough; and after some time undertook to recommend his pretensions to his Majesty. Mr. Wycherley, in hopes to keep him standing to his word, obtained of his grace to name a day when he might introduce that modest and unfortunate poet to his new patron. At last an appointment was made, and the place of meeting was agreed to be the Roebuck. Mr. Butler and his friend attended accordingly; the Duke joined them; but as the D—l would have it, the door of the room where they sat was open, and his grace, who had seated himself near it, observing a pimp of his acquaintance (the creature too was a knight) trip by with a brace of ladies, immediately quitted his engagement to follow another kind of business, at which he was more ready than in doing good offices to men of desert, though no one was better qualified than he, both in regard to his fortune and his understanding, to protect them; and from that time to the day of his death poor Butler never found the least effect of his promise.<sup>1</sup>—*Packe's "Life of Wycherley."*

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<sup>1</sup> In the mist of obscurity passed the life of Butler, a man whose name can only perish with his language. The mode and place of his education are unknown; the events of his life are variously related; and all that can be told with certainty is that he was poor.—*Johnson's "Life of Butler."*

## Jeremy Taylor.

1613-1667.

A spirit . . . burning with Christian love ; a man constitutionally overflowing with pleasurable kindliness, who scarcely even in a casual illustration introduces the image of a woman, child, or bird, but he embalms the thought with so rich a tenderness as makes the very words seem beauties and fragments of poetry from a Euripides or Simonides.—*Coleridge*.<sup>1</sup>

Next to Chillingworth,<sup>2</sup> we know none of our older authors by whom the uncertainty of tradition, and the egregious folly of trusting to it, have been more completely demonstrated than by Jeremy Taylor. His learning is so profuse, and his imagination so brilliant, as to throw into the shade his other endowments. But when he does himself full justice, his logic is quite equal to his rhetoric.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1844.

This extraordinary man was endowed to excess with all the gifts of a great writer, but instead of balancing and correcting

<sup>1</sup> Taylor's was a great and lovely mind ; yet how much and how injuriously was it perverted by his being a follower of Laud, and by his intensely popish feelings of Church authority ! His "Liberty of Prophesying" is a work of wonderful eloquence and skill ; but if we believe the argument, what are we come to ? Why, to nothing more nor less than this, that—so much can be said for every opinion and sect, so impossible is it to settle anything by reasoning or authority of Scripture—we must appeal to some positive jurisdiction on earth, *ut sit finis controversiarum*. In fact, the whole book is the precise argument used by papists, to induce men to admit the necessity of a supreme and infallible head of the church on earth. It is one of the works which pre-eminently gives countenance to the saying of Charles II. or James II.—I forget which—"When you of the Church of England contend with the Catholics, you use the argument of the Puritans ; when you contend with the Puritans you immediately adopt all the weapons of the Catholics." Taylor never speaks with the slightest respect or affection of Luther, Calvin, or any other of the great Reformers ; at least, not in any of his learned works ; but he saints every trumpery monk or friar, down to the very latest canonizations of the Pope. I fear you will think me harsh when I say that I believe Taylor was perhaps unconsciously half a Socinian in heart.—"*Tabie Talk*."

<sup>2</sup> Of Chillingworth, Gibbon says : "His frequent changes proceeded from too nice an inquisition into truth. His doubts grew out of himself ; he assisted them with all the strength of his reason ; he was then too hard for himself ; but finding as little quiet and repose in those victories, he quickly recovered by a new appeal to his own judgment ; so that in all his sallies and retreats he was in fact his own convert." "Bayle and Chillingworth," says Macaulay, "two of the most sceptical of mankind, turned Catholics from sincere conviction."

each other, each seems to seize him by turns, and hurry him away in unresisted mastery. His consummate reasoning powers are perpetually betraying him into refinements and subtleties. The inexhaustible learning of Taylor is uncritical beyond his time ; passages from every quarter are heaped up with indiscriminate profusion—loose, fragmentary, of all ages, of every shade of authority. His poetic imagination is not merely redundant of the richest and most varied imagery, but works out every image and illustration to the most remote and fanciful analogies. His very command of language seems to involve him in intricate and endless sentences, in order that he may show his wonderful power of evolving himself with apparent ease, and of giving a kind of rhythm and harmony, a cadence sometimes sweet to lusciousness, to this long-drawn succession of words and images.—*Quarterly Review*.

For eloquence we must ascend as high as the days of Barrow and Jeremy Taylor ; and even there, while we are delighted with their energy, their copiousness, and their fancy, we are in danger of being suffocated by a redundancy that abhors all discrimination, which compares till it perplexes, and illustrates till it confounds.—*Sydney Smith*.

By his florid and youthful beauty, his sweet and pleasant air, his sublime and raised discourses, he made his hearers take him for some young angel descended from the visions of glory.—*Dr. Rust*.

He was a person of a most sweet and obliging humor, of great candour and ingenuity ; and there was so much of salt and fineness of wit, and prettiness of address in his familiar discourses, as made his conversation have all the pleasantness of a comedy and all the usefulness of a sermon ; his soul was made up of harmony, and he never spoke but he charmed his hearers with the clearness of his reason, whilst all his words, and his very tones and cadences were strangely musical.—*Ibid.*<sup>1</sup>

His writings are a perpetual feast to me. His hospitable

<sup>1</sup> A yet higher character has been given by this divine :—"He had," he says, "the good humour of a gentleman, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, the wisdom of a chancellor, the sagacity of a prophet, the reason of an angel, and the piety of a saint. He had devotion enough for a cloister, learning enough for a university, and wit enough for a college of virtuosi ; and had his parts and endowments been parcelled out amongst his clergy that he left behind him, it would perhaps have made one of the best dioceses in the world."

board groans under the weight and multitude of viands. • Yet I seldom rise from his perusal without recollecting the excellent observation of Minucius Felix: "*Fabulas et errores ab imperitis parentibus discimus et, quod gravius est, ipsis studiis et disciplinis elaboramus.*"—*Southey*.

All his defects in style are more than compensated by the splendid imagery with which he so frequently clothes his ideas. Thoughts which, expressed by a common writer, would pass off the mind without striking the imagination or impressing themselves on the memory, start up living, eloquent images under the magic of his pen; and these, by their simple and combined effects, give an air of originality even to subjects like the great truths of religion, few and simple as they are, where repetition is unavoidable and the range of illustration limited. This is the great charm of Jeremy Taylor's writings, wherein the ever-varying lines of fancy play like the corruscations of an aurora borealis, and on which imagination stamps the genuine impress of sublime genius.—*Dr. Hughes*.

His style unfolds the colours of the rainbow; floats like a bubble through the air; or is like innumerable dewdrops that glitter on the face of morning and twinkle as they glitter.—*Hazlitt*.

I can fathom the understandings of most men, yet I am not certain that I can always fathom the understanding of Jeremy Taylor.—*Warburton*.

## Richard Baxter.

1615-1691.

I asked him (Johnson) what works of Richard Baxter I should read. He said, "Read any of them; they are all good."—*Boswell*.

A man of great piety, and if he had not meddled in too many things, would have been esteemed one of the learned men of the age. He writ near three hundred books; of these three are large folio. He had a very moving and pathetic way of writing,<sup>1</sup> and was his whole life long a man of great zeal

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<sup>1</sup> Baxter has characterized his own writing:—"The commonness and the greatness of men's necessities commanded me to do anything that I could for their relief, and to bring forth some water to cast upon this fire, though I had not at hand a silver vessel to carry it in, nor thought it the most fit. The plainest words are the most profitable oratory in the weightiest matters. Fineness for ornament, and delicacy for delight; but they answer not necessity, though sometimes they may modestly attend that which answers it."—*ED.*

and much simplicity; but was most unhappily subtle and metaphysical in everything.—*Bishop Burnet.*

A man famous for weakness of body, and strength of mind, for having the strongest sense of religion himself, and exciting a sense of it in the thoughtless and profligate; for preaching more sermons, engaging in more controversies, and writing more books than any other nonconformist of his age.—*Granger.*

His practical writings were never mended; his controversial seldom confuted.—*Dr. Barrow.*

Eminent not only for his piety and his fervid devotional eloquence, but for his moderation, his knowledge of political affairs, and his skill in judging of characters.—*Macaulay.*

Read Baxter's funeral sermon, and some of the more serious passages of his life, and found them striking, and in some respects appropriate; but how sadly do I fall short of him, particularly where he speaks of his calumnious assailants! Fifty books were written against him; about twenty-three, I think, were written *for* and *against* me, besides three years' monthly attack from the Anti-Jacobin; but while Baxter blessed God that none of these things disturbed him, I have to lament that through my want of his faith and piety, they had nearly destroyed my life. In one thing only I had the advantage: I never replied to my calumniators. In this one thing his trial was less than mine—that his calumniators did not hinder him in the service of God by diminishing his estimation as a writer.—*Hannah More.*

Launched into the ocean of speculative inquiry, without the anchorage of parental instruction and filial reverence, Baxter would have been drawn by his constitutional tendencies into that sceptical philosophy, through the long annals of which no single name is to be found to which the gratitude of mankind has been yielded, or is justly due. He had much in common with the most eminent doctors of that school—the animal frame characterized by sluggish appetites, languid passions, and great nervous energy; the intellectual nature distinguished by subtlety to seize distinctions more than by wit to detect analogies; by the power to dive, instead of the faculty to soar; by skill to analyze subjective truths, rather than by ability to combine them with each other, and with objective realities. But what was wanting in his sensitive, and deficient in his intellectual structure, was balanced and corrected by the spiritual elevation



of his mind. If not enamoured of the beautiful, nor conversant with the ideal, nor able to grasp the comprehensive and the abstract, he enjoyed that clear mental vision which attends on moral purity, the rectitude of judgment which rewards the subjection of the will to the reason, the loftiness of thought awakened by habitual communion with the source of light, and the earnest stability of purpose inseparable from the predominance of the social above the selfish affections.—*Edin. Review*, 1839.

"Richard! Richard! dost thou think here to poison the Court! Richard, thou art an old fellow—an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition, I might say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade, forty years ago, it had been happy.—*Lord Jeffries*, "*Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors*."

### Sir John Denham.

1615-1668.

Denham and Waller improved our versification, and Dryden perfected it.—*Prior*.

He is one of the writers that improved our taste, and advanced our language; and whom therefore we ought to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.—*Johnson*.

"Cooper's Hill" has met with universal applause, though its subject seems rather descriptive than instructing; but it is not the hill, the river, and the stag chase; it is the good verse and the fine reflections so frequently interspersed, and as it were interwoven with the rest, that give it the value, and will make it, as was said of true wit, everlasting like the sun.—*Pope*.

Then in came Denham, that limping old bard,  
Whose fame on the "Sophy" and "Cooper's Hill" stands,  
And brought many stationers who swore very hard  
That nothing sold better—except 'twere his lands.  
But Apollo advised him to write something more  
To clear a suspicion which possess'd the Court—  
That "Cooper's Hill," so much bragg'd on before,  
Was writ by a vicar, who had forty pounds for't.—*Dryden*.

His wit broke out like the Irish rebellion, threescore thousand strong, when nobody was aware or in the least suspected it.—*Waller*.

Sir John Denham in his "Cooper's Hill" (for none other of his poems merit attention) has a loftiness and vigour which had not before him been attained by any English poet who wrote in rhyme. The mechanical difficulties of that measure retarded its improvement. Shakspeare, whose tragic scenes are sometimes wonderfully forcible and expressive, is a very indifferent poet when he attempts to rhyme.—*Hume*.<sup>1</sup>

### Sir Roger L'Estrange.

1616-1704.

Sir Roger L'Estrange, who appears to have greatly surpassed his rivals, and to have been esteemed as the most perfect model of political writing, merits little praise. The temper of the man was factious and brutal, and the compositions of the author very indifferent. In his multifarious productions and meagre translations, we discover nothing that indicates one amiable sentiment, to compensate for a barbarous diction, and a heavy load of political trash. His attempts at wit are clumsy exertions; the awkward efforts of a German who labours on a delicate toy. When he assumes the gravity of the sage, he seems more fortunate in extorting a laugh; burlesquing the most solemn reflections by quaint and uncouth expression.—*I. D'Israeli*.

The chief manager of all those angry writings was one Sir Roger L'Estrange, a man who had lived in all the late times, and was furnished with many passages and an unexhausted copiousness in writing; so that for four years he published three or four sheets a week under the title of the "Observer," all tending to defame the contrary party, and to make the clergy apprehend their ruin was designed.—*Burnet*.

L'Estrange was by no means deficient in readiness and shrewdness, and his diction, though coarse and disfigured by a

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<sup>1</sup> And yet of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," the most poetical of Shakspeare's dramas, at least half is in rhyme, and that half includes some of the loveliest passages in the play. \* Such was the criticism of the eighteenth century!—*ED*.

mean and flippant jargon, which then passed for wit in the green-room and the tavern, was not without keenness and vigour. But his nature, at once ferocious and ignoble, showed itself in every line that he penned. When the first "Observers" appeared there was some excuse for his acrimony, for the Whigs were then powerful, and he had to contend against numerous adversaries whose unscrupulous violence might seem to justify unsparing retaliation. But in 1685 all opposition had been crushed. A generous spirit would have disdained to insult a party which could not reply, and to aggravate the misery of prisoners, of exiles, of bereaved families; but from the malice of L'Estrange the grave was no hiding place, and the house of mourning no sanctuary.—*Macaulay*.

### Abraham Cowley.

1618-1667.

To him no author was unknown,  
Yet what he wrote was all his own :  
He melted not the ancient gold,  
Nor with Ben Jonson did make bold  
To plunder all the Roman stores  
Of poets and of orators.—*Denham*.

To my bookseller's and did buy "Scott's Discourse of Witches;" and to hear Mr. Cowley mightily lamented (his death) by Dr. Ward, the Bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Bates, who were standing there, as the best poet of our nation, and as good a man.—*Pepys*.

The truth is, sir, methinks in other matters his wit excelled most other men's, but in his moral and divine works it outdid itself. And no doubt it proceeded from this cause, that in other lighter kinds of poetry he chiefly represented the humours and affections of others; but in these he sat to himself, and drew the figure of his own mind.—*Dr. Sprat*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Of Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, Macaulay has left the following character:—"He was a man to whose character posterity has scarcely done justice. Unhappily for his fame, it has been usual to print his verses in collections of the British poets; and those who judge of him by his verses must consider him as a servile imitator, who, without one spark of Cowley's admirable genius, mimicked whatever was least commendable in Cowley's

In the general review of Cowley's poetry, it will be found that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unskilful selection ; with much thought, but with little imagery ; that he is never pathetic and rarely sublime ; but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.—*Johnson*.

Cowley was beloved by every muse that he courted.—*Fellon*.

O'errun with wit, and lavish of his thoughts ;  
His turns too closely on the reader press ;  
He had more pleas'd us had he pleas'd us less.<sup>1</sup>—*Addison*.

His Pindaric odes cannot be perused with common patience by a lover of antiquity.—*Warton*.

Who now reads Cowley ? if he pleases, yet  
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit.  
Forgot his Epic, nay, Pindaric art,  
But still I love the language of his heart.—*Pope*.

Cowley is an author extremely corrupted by the bad taste of his age ; but, had he lived even in the purest times of Greece or Rome, he must always have been a very indifferent poet. He had no ear for harmony ; and his verses are only known to be such by the rhyme which terminates them. In his rugged, untunable numbers are conveyed sentiments the most strained and distorted ; long-spun allegories, distant allusions, and forced conceits. Great ingenuity, however, and vigour of thought sometimes break out amidst those unnatural conceptions.—*Hume*.

To speak of this neglected writer as a poet. He had a quick and ready conception, the true enthusiasm of genius, and vast materials with which learning as well as fancy had supplied him for it to work upon. He had besides a prodigious command of expression, had a natural and copious flow of eloquence on every occasion, and understood our language in all its force and energy. Yet betwixt the native exuberance of his wit,

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manner ; but those who are acquainted with Sprat's prose writings will form a very different estimate of his powers. He was indeed a great master of our language, and possessed at once the eloquence of the orator, of the controversialist, and of the historian. His moral character might have passed with little censure had he belonged to a less sacred profession ; for the worst that can be said of him was that he was indolent, luxurious, and worldly."

<sup>1</sup> Nothing can be more exquisitely ridiculous than this line.—*Ed*.

which hurried him frequently on conceits, and the epidemical contagion of that time, which possessed all writers with the love of points, of affected turns, and hard unnatural allusion, there are few of his poems which a man of just taste will read with admiration or even with pleasure. Some few there are and enough to save his name from oblivion, or rather to consecrate it, with those of the master-spirits of this country, to immortality. I would chiefly mention "The Complaint," "The Hymn to Light," and the "Ode to the Royal Society." The first and last are of the Pindaric kind, and I think well deserve the character given them by Mr. Waller, of being better than his master's. . . . On the whole he is a remarkable instance of the hurt immoderate praise does to a poet. His prodigious wit made him exclusively admired in his own time; but, being in a false taste, that admiration could not last; and it is the humdur of mankind to revenge themselves on a great writer who has engrossed more fame than he deserves, by denying him his due when his proper value comes to be discovered.—*Bishop Hurd.*

## John Evelyn.

1620-1706.

For my part I profess that I delight in a cheerful gaiety, affect and cultivate variety; the universe itself were not beautiful to me without it.—*Evelyn.*

He knew that retirement in his own hands was industry and benefit to mankind; but in those of others, laziness and inutility.—*Horace Walpole.*

I know no man that possesses more private happiness than you do in your garden, and yet no man who makes his happiness more publick by a free communication of the art and knowledge of it to others. All that I am able yet to do is only to recommend to mankind the search of that felicity which you instruct them how to find and to enjoy.—*Cowley.*

That model of a meritorious English gentleman.—*Lucy Aiken.*

His "Diary," less captivating, less graphic, less explicit than that of Pepys, is a perfect granary of many and various kinds of knowledge. The historian will resort to it for its truth—truth never hidden by eyen the strong party bias of the annalist. The philosopher will find curious hints; the

antiquary precious records—each in his own peculiar line. The moralist traces through all, and in all, the lofty, enduring practical faith of an enlightened soul. We, as women, can also say more. In his contributions to social literature Evelyn has done justice to the subject of dress.—*Grace Wharton.*

An English gentleman of the highest order, with a character full of sweetness and spirit; a patriot who kept his loyalty in the most dangerous times, and a Christian who preserved his integrity in the most immoral; a scholar with rather a pedantic fondness for learned phrases and scraps of literature, but withal a philosopher who viewed every object with a desire to extract from it all the beauty and goodness it contained; who delighted to breathe in the sweet atmosphere of gardens and to recline under the sylvan shades with which he had adorned his country.—*Dr. Hughes.*

By water to Deptford and there made a visit to Mr. Evelyn, who, among other things, showed me most excellent painting in little, in distemper, Indian incke, water-colours, graveing, and, above all, the old mezzo-tinto, and the manner of it, which is very pretty and good things done with it. He read to me also very much of his discourse, he hath been many years and now is about, about Gardenage, which is a most noble and pleasant piece. He read me part of a play or two of his own making, very good, but not as he conceits them, I think, to be. He showed me his Hortus Hyemalis, leaves laid up in a book of several plants kept dry, which preserve colour, however, and look very finely, better than an herball. In fine, a most excellent person he is, and must be allowed a little for a little conceitedness; but he may well be so, being a man so much above others.—*Samuel Pepys.*

It is to Evelyn that we owe a large proportion of our safest materials for a fair estimate of the personal character of Charles II. and his unhappy brother. Without his evidence we should be comparatively in the dark as to the most curious and important (though by no means the most dignified) chapter in our history, the Revolution of 1688.—*Quarterly Review*, 1847.

## Andrew Marvel.

1620-1678.

The liveliest droll of the age who writ in a burlesque strain, but with so peculiar and entertaining a conduct, that from the king down to the tradesman his books were read with great pleasure.—*Burnet*.

Marvel's poems are full of wit or sentiment, as the vein may be which we hit upon. Sometimes, indeed, his little plots of Parnassus are laid out rather too much in the style of old English gardening, square and formal; but they never fail in possessing something good. The heart of the poet was in everything he did, and there was not a purer or a firmer one in the world.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1825.

He was a most excellent preacher, who never broached what he had not brewed, but preached what he had pre-studied, in-somuch that he was wont to say, that he would cross the common proverb, which called Saturday the working day, and Monday the holiday of preachers.—*Fuller*.

He was of middling stature, pretty strong set, roundish-faced, cherry-checked, hazel-eyed, brown-haired. In his conversation he was modest and of very few words. He was wont to say he would not drink high or freely with any one with whom he could not trust his life.—*Aubrey*.

## George Fox.

1624-1690.

He long wandered from place to place teaching his strange theology, shaking like an aspen leaf in his paroxysms of fanatical excitement, forcing his way into churches, which he nicknamed steeple-houses, interrupting prayers and sermons with clamour and scurrility, and pestering rectors and justices with epistles much resembling burlesques of those sublime odes in which the Hebrew prophets foretold the calamities of Babylon and Tyre. He soon acquired great notoriety by these feats. His strange face, his strange<sup>e</sup> chant, his immovable hat, and his leather breeches were known all over the country, and he boasts that, as soon as the rumour was heard, "The Man in Leather Breeches is Coming," terror seized hypocritical pro-

fessors, and hireling priests made haste to get out of his way. He was repeatedly imprisoned and set in the stocks, sometimes justly, for disturbing the public worship of congregations, and sometimes unjustly, for merely talking nonsense. He soon gathered round him a body of disciples, some of whom went beyond him in absurdity. He has told us that one of his friends walked naked through Skipton declaring the truth, and that another was divinely moved to go naked during several years to market-places and to the houses of gentlemen and clergymen. Fox complains bitterly that these pious acts prompted by the Holy Spirit were requited by an untoward generation with hooting, pelting, coachwhipping, and horsewhipping. But, though he applauded the zeal of the sufferers, he did not go quite to their lengths. He sometimes, indeed, was impelled to strip himself partially. Thus he pulled off his shoes and walked barefooted through Lichfield, crying "Woe to the bloody city!" But it does not appear that he ever thought it his duty to appear before the public without that decent garment from which his popular appellation was derived.—*Macaulay*.

He was the son of a weaver, and was himself bound apprentice to a shoemaker. Feeling a stronger impulse towards spiritual contemplations than towards the mechanical profession, he left his master and went about the country clothed in a leathern doublet, a dress which he long affected, as well for its singularity as its cheapness. That he might wean himself from sublunary objects, he broke off all connexion with his friends and family, and never dwelt a moment in one place, lest habit should beget new connexions, and depress the sublimity of his aerial meditations. He frequently wandered into the woods, and passed whole days in hollow trees, without company or any other amusement than his Bible. Having reached that pitch of perfection as to need no other book, he soon advanced to another state of spiritual progress, and began to pay less regard even to that divine composition itself. His own heart, he imagined, was full of the same inspiration which had guided the prophets and apostles themselves; and by this inward light must every spiritual obscurity be cleared, by this living spirit

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<sup>1</sup> "There is not a year, hardly a month, wherein some Quaker or other is not going about our streets here in London, either naked or in some exotic figure, denouncing woes, judgments, plagues, fires, sword and famine."—"The Snake in the Grass," 1690.



must the dead letter be animated. When he had been sufficiently consecrated in his own imagination, he felt that the fumes of self-applause soon dissipate, if not continually supplied by the admiration of others ; and he began to seek proselytes. Proselytes were easily gained at a time when all men's affections were turned towards religion, and when the most extravagant modes of it were sure to be most popular. All the forms of ceremony, invented by pride and ostentation, Fox and his disciples, from a superior pride and ostentation, carefully rejected ; even the ordinary rites of civility were shunned as the nourishment of carnal vanity and self-conceit.—*Hume*.

## Robert Boyle.

1627—1691.

A gentleman of very noble birth, and more eminent for his liberality, learning, and virtue ; and of whom I would say much more, but that he still lives.—*I. Walton*.

The name of Boyle is auspicious to literature.—*Warton*.

An honourable person, whose piety I value more than his nobility and learning, though both be great.—*Dr. Barlow*, "*Walton's Life of Sanderson*."

A gentleman who was an honour to his country, and a more diligent as well as successful enquirer into the works of nature than any other our nation has ever produced.—*Addison*.

He had the profoundest veneration for the great God of heaven and earth that I have ever observed in any person.—*Burnet*, "*Sermons*."

He was looked upon by all who knew him as a very perfect pattern. He was a very devout Christian ; humble and modest, almost to a fault ; of a most spotless and exemplary life in all respects. He was highly charitable, and was a mortified and self-denied man that delighted in nothing so much as doing good.—*Burnet*, "*Hist. of My Own Times*."

The excellent Mr. Boyle was the person who seems to have been designed by nature to succeed to the labours and inquiries of that extraordinary genius I have just mentioned (Bacon). By innumerable experiments he, in a great measure, filled out those plans and outlines of science which his predecessor had sketched out. His life was spent in the pursuit of nature, through a great variety of forms and changes, and in the most

rational as well as devout adoration of its Divine Author.—*Fohn Hughes, "Spectator."*

Boyle improved the pneumattick engine invented by Otto Guericke, and was thereby enabled to make several new and curious experiments on the air, as well as on other bodies. His chemistry is much admired by those who are acquainted with that art. His hydrostatics contain a greater mixture of reasoning and invention, with experiment, than any other of his works ; but his reasoning is still remote from that boldness and temerity which had led astray so many philosophers. Boyle was a great partisan of the mechanical philosophy : a theory which, by discovering some of the secrets of nature, and allowing us to imagine the rest, is so agreeable to the natural vanity and curiosity of men.—*Hume.*

## George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

1627–1688.

For his person he was the glory of the age, and any court wherever he came. Of a most graceful and charming mien and behaviour ; a strong, tall, and active body, all which gave a lustre to the ornaments of his mind ; of an admirable wit and excellent judgment, and had all other qualities of a gentleman.—*Brian Fairfax.*

The witty Duke of Buckingham was an extreme bad man. His duel with Lord Shrewsbury was concerted between him and Lady Shrewsbury. All that morning she was trembling for her gallant, and wishing the death of her husband ; and after his fall, 'tis said the Duke slept with her in his bloody shirt.—*Lord Peterborough.*

A man so various that he seemed to be  
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.  
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,  
Was everything by starts, and nothing long.  
But in the course of one revolving moon,  
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.  
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,  
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.

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*Dryden.*

He was extremely handsome, and still thought himself much

more so than he really was, although he had a great deal of discernment. Yet his vanity made him mistake some civilities as intended for his person, which were only bestowed on his wit and drollery.—*Grammont.*

A Duke of Bucks.—Is one that has studied the whole body of vice. His parts are disproportionate to the whole, and, like a monster, he has more of some and less of others than he should have. He has pull'd down all that fabric that Nature has raised in him, and built himself up again after a model of his own. . . . His appetite to his pleasures is diseased and crazy, like the *pica* in a woman that longs to eat that which was never made for food ; or a girl in the green sickness that eats chalk and mortar. Continual wine, music, and women put false value upon things, which by custom became habitual, and debauch his understanding, so that he retains no right notion nor sense of things.—*Samuel Butler.*

I can recollect no performance of Buckingham that stamps him a true genius. His reputation was owing to his rank.—*Warton.*

Talking of the comedy of the "Rehearsal," Johnson said, "It has not wit enough to keep it sweet. . . . It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction."—*Boswell.*

The madness of vice appear'd in his person in very eminent instances, since at last he became contemptible and poor, sickly and sunk in his parts, as well as in all other respects, so that his conversation was as much avoided as ever it had been courted.—*Bishop Burnet.*

A person of a great deal of wit and ingenuity, and of excellent judgment. . . . His forward genius was improved by a liberal education and the conversation of the greatest persons of his time ; and all these cultivated and improved by study and travel.—*Briscoe.*

The finest gentleman I ever saw.—*Sir John Reresby.*

The "Rehearsal" is so perfect a masterpiece in its way, and so truly original, that, notwithstanding its prodigious success, even the task of imitation, which most kinds of excellence have invited inferior geniuses to undertake, has appeared too arduous to be attempted with regard to this, which through a whole century stands alone, notwithstanding that the very plays it was written expressly to ridicule are forgotten, and the taste it was meant to expose totally exploded.—*Reed, "Dramatic Biography."*

The Duke of Buckingham possessed all the advantages which

a graceful person, a high rank, a splendid fortune, and a lively wit could bestow ; but by his wild conduct, unrestrained either by prudence or principle, he found means to render himself in the end odious and even insignificant. The least interest could make him abandon his honour ; the smallest pleasure could seduce him from his interest ; the most frivolous caprice was sufficient to counterbalance his pleasure. By his want of secrecy and constancy he destroyed his character in public life ; by his contempt of order and economy he dissipated his private fortune ; by riot and debauchery he ruined his health ; and he remained at last as incapable of doing hurt as he had ever been little desirous of doing good to mankind.—*Hume*.

## Sir William Temple.

1628-1700.

Temple's style is the perfection of practical and easy good breeding. If he does not penetrate very deeply into a subject, he professes a very gentlemanly acquaintance with it ; if he makes rather a parade of Latin, it was the custom of the day, as it was the custom for a gentleman to envelope his head in a periwig, and his hands in lace ruffles.—*Thackeray*.

Sir William Temple was the first writer who gave cadence to English prose. Before his time they were careless of arrangement, and did not mind whether a sentence ended with an important word or an insignificant word ; or with what part of speech it was concluded.—*Johnson*.

He was a vain man, much blown up in his own conceit, which he showed too indecently on all occasions. He had a true judgment in affairs, and very good principles with relation to government, but in nothing else. He seemed to think that things were as they are from all eternity ; at least he thought religion was fit only for the mob. He was a great admirer of the sect of Confucius, in China. . . . He was a corrupter of all that came near him.—*Burnet*.

He was no profound thinker. He was merely a man of lively parts and quick observation ; a man of the world among men of letters ; a man of letters among men of the world.—*Macaulay*.

With him died all that was good and amiable among men.—*Swift*.

To Temple's sincerity his subsequent conduct gives abundant testimony. When he had reason to think that his services could no longer be useful to his country, he withdrew wholly from public business, and resolutely adhered to the preference of philosophical retirement, which, in his circumstances, was just, in spite of every temptation which occurred to bring him back to a more active scene. The remainder of his life he seems to have employed in the most noble contemplations, and the most elegant amusements; every enjoyment heightened, no doubt, by reflecting on the honourable part he had acted in public affairs, and without any regret on his own account (whatever he might feel for his country) at having been driven from them.—*C. J. Fox.*

Of all the considerable writers of this age, Sir William Temple is almost the only one that kept himself altogether unpolluted by that inundation of vice and licentiousness which overwhelmed the nation. The style of this author, though extremely negligent, and even infected with foreign idioms, is agreeable and interesting. That mixture of vanity which appears in his works, is rather a recommendation to them. By means of it we enter into acquaintance with the character of the author, full of honour and humanity, and fancy that we are engaged, not in the perusal of a book, but in conversation with a companion.—*Hume.*

## John Bunyan.

1628-1688.

No man of common sense and integrity can deny that Bunyan was a practical atheist, a worthless, contemptible infidel, a vile rebel to God and goodness, a common profligate, a soul-despising, a soul-murdering, a soul-damning, thoughtless wretch as could exist on the face of the earth.—*Ryland.*

Though composed in the lowest style of English, the "Pilgrim's Progress" is without slang or false grammar. If you were to polish it you would at once destroy the reality of the vision. I would not have believed beforehand that Calvinism could be painted in such exquisitely delightful colours. I know of no book (the Bible being excepted as above all comparison) which, according to my judgment and experience, I could so safely recommend as teaching and enforcing the whole saving

truth, according to the mind that was in Christ Jesus, as the "Pilgrim's Progress." I am convinced that it is the best summary of Evangelical Christianity ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired.—*Coleridge*.

His "Pilgrim's Progress" has great merit, both for invention, imagination, and the conduct of the story; and it has had the best evidence of its merit, the general and continued approbation of mankind. Few books, I believe, have had a more extensive sale. It is remarkable that it begins very much like the poem of Dante; yet there was no translation of Dante when Bunyan wrote. There is reason to think that he had read Spenser.—*Johnson*.

The wicked tinker of Elstow.—*Ivimey*.

The "Pilgrim's Progress" is perhaps the only book about which, after the lapse of a hundred years, the educated minority has come over to the opinion of the common people.—*Macaulay*.<sup>1</sup>

Honest John was the first that I know of who mixed narration and dialogue; a method of writing very engaging to the reader, who, in the most interesting parts, finds himself, as it were, admitted into the company and present at the conversation. Defoe has imitated him successfully in his "Robinson Crusoe," in his "Moll Flanders," and other pieces; and Richardson has done the same in his "Pamela."—*Benjamin Franklin*.

Bunyan's work is the poetry of Puritanism. A novel it cannot be called; for it has nothing to do with real life any more than the visions of Fifth Monarchy men had to do with practical forms of government. But, precisely for that reason, was it true to the age in which it was composed. The spirit that had overthrown the Stuarts is more visible in Bunyan's allegory than in "Milton's Defence."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1838.

The Spenser of the people.—*I. D'Israeli*.

Bunyan was confident in his own powers of expression. . . . And he might well be confident in it. His is a homespun style, not a manufactured one; and what a difference is there between its homeliness, and the flippant vulgarity of the Roger L'Estrange and Tom Brown school! If it is not a well of

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<sup>1</sup> "Bunyan," says Macaulay, in his "History," "is indeed as decidedly the first of allegorists as Demosthenes is the first of orators, and Shakespeare the first of dramatists."

English undefiled to which the poet as well as the philologist must repair, if they would drink of the living waters, it is a clear stream of current English—the vernacular speech of his age; sometimes indeed, in its rusticity and coarseness, but always in its plainness and its strength. To this natural style Bunyan is in some degree beholden for his general popularity; his language is everywhere level to the most ignorant reader, and to the meanest capacity; there is a homely reality about it; a nursery tale is not more intelligible in its manner of narration, to a child. Another cause of his popularity is, that he taxes the imagination as little as the understanding. The vividness of his own, which, as his history shows, sometimes could not distinguish ideal impressions from actual ones, occasioned this. He saw the things of which he was writing as distinctly with his mind's eye as if they were, indeed, passing before him in a dream.—*Robert Southey.*

The "Pilgrim's Progress" is a wonderful work; but till all distinctions of rank have been first confused and then destroyed, John Bunyan must stand far aloof from Edmund Spenser, though he, too, has his place among the hierarchies.—*Wilson.*

## Bishop Tillotson.

1630–1694.

A man of a clear head and a sweet temper. He had the brightest thoughts and the most correct style of all our divines; and was esteemed the best preacher of the age. He was a very prudent man, and had such a management of it, that I never knew any clergyman so universally esteemed and beloved as he was for above 20 years. He was eminent for his opposition to Popery; he was no friend to persecution, and stood up much against atheism. Nor did any man contribute more to bring the city to love our worship than he did. But there was so little superstition, and so much reason and gentleness in his way of explaining things, that malice was long levelled at him, and in conclusion broke out fiercely on him.—*Burnet.*

He (Johnson) could but just endure the smooth verbosity of Tillotson.—*Sir John Hawkins.*

I should not advise a preacher of this day to imitate Tillotson's style; though I don't know; I should be cautious of

objecting to what has been applauded by so many suffrages.—*Fohnson.*

This prelate was, perhaps, the first of our great preachers whose diction was sufficiently free from Latinisms and scholastic terms to serve as a general model; and so pure was his taste that even now the learner in the art of composition could scarcely draw from a better or more authentic source than his "well of English undefiled."—*Lucy Aikin.*

Tillotson, Moore, Patrick, Kidder, Fowler and Cumberland,<sup>1</sup> names that will ever be pronounced with veneration by such as are capable of esteeming solid, well-employed learning and genuine piety, and that will always shine among the brightest ornaments of the Church of England.—*Dr. Maclaine.*

I have frequently heard him (Dryden) own with pleasure that if he had any talent for English prose, it was owing to his often having read the writings of the great Archbishop Tillotson.—*Congreve.*

Of all the members of the Low Church party, Tillotson stood highest in general estimation. As a preacher, he was thought, by his contemporaries, to have surpassed all rivals, living or dead. Posterity has reversed this judgment. Yet Tillotson still keeps his place as a legitimate English classic. His highest flights were indeed far below those of Taylor, of Barrow, of South; but his oratory was more correct and equable than theirs. No quaint conceits, no pedantic quotations from Talmudists and Scholiasts, no mean images, buffoon stories, scurrilous invectives, ever marred the effect of his grave and temperate discourses. His reasoning was just sufficiently profound and sufficiently refined to be followed by a popular audience with that slight degree of intellectual exertion which is a pleasure. His style is not brilliant, but it is pure, transparently clear, and equally free from the levity and from the stiffness which disfigure the sermons of some eminent divines

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<sup>1</sup> Of such writers, Macaulay finely says, they were "men familiar with all ancient and modern learning; men able to encounter Hobbes or Bossuet at all the weapons of controversy; men who could in their sermons set forth the majesty and beauty of Christianity, with such justness of thought and such energy of language, that the indolent Charles roused himself to listen, and the fastidious Buckingham forgot to sneer; men whose address, politeness, and knowledge of the world qualified them to manage the consciences of the wealthy and the noble; men with whom Halifax loved to discuss the interests of the empire, and from whom Dryden was not ashamed to own that he learned to write."—ED.



of the seventeenth century. He is always serious ; yet there is about his manner a certain graceful ease, which marks him as a man who knows the world, who has lived in populous cities, and in splendid courts, and who has conversed not only with books, but with lawyers and merchants, wits and beauties, statesmen and princes. The greatest charm of his compositions, however, is derived from the benignity and candour which appear in every line, and which shone forth not less conspicuously in his life than in his writings.—*Macaulay*.

### Isaack Barrow.

1630-1677.

He was not a fair man—he left nothing to be said by anyone who came after him.—*Charles II.*

The sermons of Barrow, and his “Treatise on the Pope’s Supremacy,” include the whole domain of theology and morals. There is scarcely a question which is not exhausted and, by his inimitable copiousness of language, placed in every point of view, and examined with the most conscientious accuracy.—*Quarterly Review*.

I mentioned that Mr. Fox always spoke of Barrow with enthusiasm, and that, upon the strength of this opinion, I bought his sermons, but found him insufferably dry ; at least as far as I read, which was not very far. It is certain, however, I believe, that besides containing the amplest stores of theological learning, he has also bursts of eloquence, which though not so poetical as Jeremy Taylor’s, are, from their variety and force, far more striking.—*Thomas Moore*.

In him one admires more the prodigious fecundity of his invention, and the uncommon strength of his conceptions, than the felicity of his execution or his talent in composition. We see a genius far surpassing the common, peculiar indeed almost to himself ; but that genius often shooting wild, and unchastised by any discipline or study of eloquence. On every subject he multiplies words with an overflowing copiousness, but it is always a torrent of strong ideas and significant expressions which he pours forth.—*Dr. Blair*.

Justification by faith. On this subject I know of nothing so precise and accurate (though numberless and vast volumes have been written upon it from the Reformation downwards), as

what is contained in Dr. Barrow's "Discourses on Faith." His notion on the whole is that Justification, as used by the sacred writers, and St. Paul in particular, means remission of sins, and admission into a state of favour with God, as if we were righteous, and not the infusion of inherent holiness by the Spirit ; that this justification was primarily made on our entrance into the Christian covenant by baptism, and is afterwards received and regranted, as it were, on our repentance and return from such transgressions as we may have fallen into after baptism.—*Dr. Hurd.*

## John Dryden.

1631–1700.

You do live in as much ignorance and darkness as you did in the womb ; your writings are like a Jack-of-all-trade's shop ; they have a variety, but nothing of value ; and if thou art not the dullest plant animal that ever the earth produced, all that I have conversed with are strangely mistaken in thee.—*Martin Clifford.*

He was of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those who had offended him. His friendship, where he profess'd it, went beyond his profession. . . . He was of a very easy, of a very pleasing access ; but somewhat slow and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others ; he had that in nature which abhorred intrusion.—*Congreve.*

A monster of immodesty and of impurity of all sorts.—*Bishop Burnet.*

My conversation is slow and dull, my humour saturnine and unreserved. In short, I am none of those who break jests in company, and make repartees.—*Dryden.*

He is a rarity which I cannot but be fond of, as one would be of a hog that could fiddle or a singing owl.—*Rochester.*

And so much for Mr. Dryden, whose burial was the same as his life—variety and not of a piece :—the quality and mob ; farce and heroics ; the sublime and ridiculous mixed in a piece ; great Cleopatra in a hackney-coach.—*Farquhar.*

The morality of his life—the practical test of his heart and his understanding—was unimpeachable.—*Robert Bell.*

Of Dryden's works it was said by Pope that "he could

select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply." Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such a variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taught *sapere et fari*, to think naturally and express forcibly.—*Johnson*.

The power of music all our hearts allow,  
And what Timotheus was is Dryden now.—*Pope*.

Mr. St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, happening to pay a morning visit to Dryden, whom he always respected, found him in an unusual agitation of spirits, even to a trembling. On inquiring the cause "I have been up all night," replied the old bard; "my musical friends made me a promise to write them an ode for the feast of St. Cecilia; I have been so struck with the subject which occur'd to me, that I could not leave it till I had completed it; here it is, finished at one sitting."—*Warton*.

I was about 17 when I first came up to town, an odd-looking boy, with short rough hair, and that sort of awkwardness which one always brings up at first out of the country with one. However, in spite of my bashfulness and appearance, I used, now and then, to thrust myself into Will's, to have the pleasure of seeing the most celebrated wits of that time, who then resorted thither. The second time that ever I was there, Mr. Dryden was speaking of his own things, as he frequently did, especially of such as had lately been published. "If anything of mine is good," says he, "'tis 'Macflecnoe'; and I value myself the more upon it, because it is the first piece of ridicule written in heroics." On hearing this I pluck'd up my spirits, so far as to say in a voice just loud enough to be heard, "That 'Macflecnoe' was a very fine poem, but that I had not imagined it to be the first that was ever written that way." On this Dryden turned short upon me, as surpris'd at my interposing; asked me how long "I had been a dealer in poetry;" and added, with a smile, "Pray, sir, what is it that you did imagine to have been writ so before?" I named Boileau's "Lutrin," and Tassoni's "Secchia Rapita" which I had read, and knew Dryden had borrow'd some strokes from each. "'Tis true," said Dryden, "I had forgot them." A little time Dryden went out, and on going spoke to me again and desired me to come

and see him the next day. I was highly delighted with the invitation, went to see him accordingly, and was well acquainted with him after, as long as he lived.—*Dean Lockier.*

Dryden comes into a room like a clown, in a druggist jacket, with a bludgeon in his hand, and in hobnail shoes. Pope enters like a gentleman, in full dress, with a bag and a sword.—*Dr. Walcot.*<sup>1</sup>

What a sycophant to the public taste was Dryden ! Sinning against his feelings, lewd in his writings, though chaste in his conversation.—*Cowper.*

I admire his talents and genius greatly, but his is not a poetical genius. The only qualities I can find in Dryden that are *essentially* poetical, are a certain ardour and impetuosity of mind, with an excellent ear. It may seem strange that I do not add to this his great command of language ; *that* he certainly has, and of such language too, as it is most desirable that a poet should possess, or rather that he should not be without. But it is not language that is, in the highest sense of the word, poetical, being neither of the imagination nor the passions ; I mean the amiable, the ennobling, or the intense passions. I do not mean to say that there is nothing of this in Dryden, but as little I think as is possible, considering how much he has written.—*Wordsworth.*

Dryden was a poet by nature, Pope by art.—*H. Walpole.*

While Dryden examined, discussed, admitted, or rejected the rules proposed by others, he forbore from prudence, indolence, or a regard for the freedom of Parnassus to erect himself into a legislator. His doctrines are scattered without system or pretence to it : it is impossible to read far without discovering some maxim for doing or forbearing which every student of poetry will do well to engrave upon the tablets of his memory ; but the author's mode of instruction is neither harsh nor dictatorial.—*Sir W. Scott.*

As a satirist he has rivalled Juvenal. As a didactic poet he might perhaps with care and meditation have rivalled Lucretius. Of lyric poets he is, if not the most sublime, the most brilliant and spirit-stirring. But nature, profuse to him of many rare

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<sup>1</sup> Walcot would allow Dryden no merit. • He contested Pope's infinite superiority poem by poem. "But, Doctor," said his opponent, "what of 'Alexander's Feast?'"—"Pooh!" exclaimed Walcot, "he was drunk when he wrote that."—ED.

gifts, had denied to him the dramatic faculty. Nevertheless all the energies of his best years were wasted on dramatic composition. He had too much judgment not to be aware that in the power of exhibiting character by means of dialogue he was deficient. That deficiency he did his best to conceal, sometimes by surprising and amusing incidents, sometimes by stately declamation, sometimes by harmonious numbers, sometimes by ribaldry but too well suited to the taste of a profane and licentious pit; but he never obtained any theatrical success equal to that which rewarded the exertions of some men far inferior to him in general powers. He thought himself fortunate if he cleared a hundred guineas by a play.—*Macaulay*.

Dryden's genius was of that sort which catches fire by its own motion: his chariot wheels get hot by driving fast.—*Coleridge*.

All his natural and all his acquired powers fitted him to found a good critical school of poetry. Indeed, he carried his reforms too far for his age. After his death our literature retrograded; and a century was necessary to bring it back to the point at which he left it. The general soundness and healthfulness of his mental constitution, his information of vast superficies, though of small volume, his wit, scarcely inferior to that of the most distinguished followers of Donne, his eloquence, grave, deliberate, and commanding, could not save him from disgraceful failure as a rival of Shakspeare, but raised him far above the level of Boileau. His command of language was immense. With him died the secret of the old poetical diction of England—the art of producing rich effect by familiar words. In the following century it was as completely lost as the Gothic method of painting glass, and was but poorly supplied by the laborious and tessellated imitations of Mason and Gray.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1828.

His plays, excepting a few scenes, are utterly disfigured by vice, or folly, or both. His translations appear too much the offspring of haste and hunger; even his fables are ill-chosen tales, conveyed in an incorrect, though spirited versification. Yet amidst this great number of loose productions, the refuse of our language, there are found some small pieces, his "Ode to St. Cecilia," the greater part of "Absalom and Achitophel," and a few more, which discover so great genius, such richness of expression, such pomp and vanity of numbers, that they leave us equally full of regret and indignation on account of

the inferiority, or rather, great absurdity, of his other writings.—*Hume.*

But see where artful Dryden next appears,  
Grown old in rhyme, but charming even in years ;  
Great Dryden next, whose tuneful muse affords  
The sweetest numbers and the fittest words.  
Whether in comic sounds or tragic airs  
She forms her voice, she moves our smiles or tears ;  
If satire or heroic strains she writes  
Her hero pleases and her satire bites ;  
From her no harsh, unartful numbers fall,  
She wears all dresses, and she charms in all.

*Addison.*<sup>1</sup>

## John Locke.

1632-1704.

Locke approaches the most awful speculations with the same indifference as if he were about to handle the properties of triangles.—*James Hogg (Ettrick Shepherd).*

His writings have diffused throughout the civilized world the love of civil liberty—the spirit of toleration and charity in religious differences—the disposition to reject whatever is obscure, fantastic or hypothetical in speculation—to reduce verbal disputes to their proper value—to abandon problems which admit of no solution—to distrust whatever cannot be clearly expressed—to render theory the simple expression of facts—and to prefer those studies which most directly contribute to human happiness.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1821.

The most elegant of prose writers.—*W. S. Landor.*

There is not in the world such a master of taciturnity and passion.—*Dr. Fell.*

In his language Locke is of all philosophers the most figurative, ambiguous, vacillating, various, and even contradictory. . . . The opinions of such a writer are not,

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<sup>1</sup> From "An Account of the Greatest English Poets," from which Shakespeare's name is omitted, to say nothing of the names of Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, Marlowe, Webster, &c. Than these rhymes (poetry they are not) a hundred volumes could not give one a better idea of the taste of the times.—ED.

therefore, to be assumed from isolated and casual expressions which themselves require to be interpreted on the general analogy of his system.—*Sir W. Hamilton.*

The affectation of passing for an original thinker glares strongly and ridiculously in Mr. Locke. Who sees not that a great part of his "Essay on Man" is taken from Hobbes ; and almost everything in his "Letters on Toleration" from Bayle ? Yet he nowhere makes the least acknowledgment of his obligations to either of those writers. They were both of them indeed writers of ill-fame. But was that a reason for his taking no notice of them ? He might have distinguished between their good and ill deserts.—*Dr. Hurd.*

To be conversant with the readings of such a man cannot fail at once to invigorate and purify the understanding. It requires some acuteness and much attention to perceive all the links of his ratiocination, to follow them, when, by their own weight, as it were, they sink to the lowest depths of metaphysics, and, rising again, stretch in one unbroken chain nearly across the whole domain of philosophy. But if we be disposed to lend him the requisite attention, it is always possible to discern the subtlest evolutions of his reasonings, to discover precisely whither they lead, and by what motives they are thitherward directed.—*J. A. St. John.*

## Samuel Pepys.

1632-1703.

A vain, silly, transparent coxcomb, without either solid talents or solid virtues.—*Lockhart.*

A man of an essentially vulgar and coarse stamp.—*Quarterly Review*, 1847.

The variety of Pepys' tastes and pursuits led him into almost every department of life. He was a man of business, a man of information, if not of learning ; a man of taste ; a man of whim ; and, to a certain degree, a man of pleasure. He was a statesman, a bel-esprit, a virtuoso, and a connoisseur. His curiosity made him an unwearyed as well as a universal learner, and whatever he saw found its way into his tables. Thus his "Diary" absolutely resembles the genial cauldrons at the wedding of Camacho, a souse into which was sure to bring forth at

once abundance and variety of whatever could gratify the most eccentric appetite.—*Sir W. Scott.*

His "Journal" contains the most unquestionable evidences of veracity; and as the writer made no scruple of committing his most secret thoughts to paper, encouraged no doubt by the confidence which he derived from the use of shorthand, perhaps there never was a publication more implicitly to be relied upon for the authenticity of its statements and the exactness with which every fact is detailed.—*Lord Braybrooke.*

It may be affirmed of this gentleman that he was, without exception, the greatest and most useful minister that ever filled the same situations in England: the Acts and Registers of the Admiralty proving this fact beyond contradiction. The principal rules and establishments in present use in those offices are well known to have been of his introducing, and most of the officers serving therein, since the Restoration, of his bringing up. He was a most studious promoter and strenuous assertor of order and discipline through all their dependencies. . . . He was a person of universal worth, and in great estimation among the literati, for his unbounded reading, his sound judgment, his great elocution, his mastery in method, his singular curiosity, and his uncommon munificence towards the advancement of learning, arts and industry in all degrees: to which were subjoined the severest morality of a philosopher, and all the polite accomplishments of a gentleman, particularly those of music, languages, conversation, and address.—*Collier's Dictionary.*

He seems to have been possessed of the most extraordinary activity, and the most indiscriminating, insatiable, and miscellaneous curiosity that ever prompted the researches or supplied the pen of a daily chronicler. Although excessively busy and diligent in his attendance at his office he finds time to go to every play, to every execution, to every procession, fire, concert, riot, trial, review, city feast, public dissection, or picture gallery, that he can hear of. Nay, there seems scarcely to have been a school-examination, a wedding, a christening, charity-sermon, bull-baiting, philosophical meeting, or private merry-making in his neighbourhood at which he was not sure to make his appearance and mindful to record all the particulars. He is the first to hear all the court scandal and all the public news—to observe the changes of fashion and the downfall of parties—to pick up family gossip and to retail



philosophical intelligence—to criticise every new house or carriage that is built—every new book or beauty that appears—every measure the king adopts, and every mistress he discards.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1825.

The avid vanity of Mr. Pepys would be gratified if made aware of the success of his "Diary;" but curiously to inquire into the reason of that success, *why* his "Diary" has been found so amusing, would not conduce to his comfort—*A. Smith*.

## Earl of Roscommon.

1633–1684.

Roscommon was more learned than Buckingham. He had laid a design of forming a society for the refining and fixing the standard of our language; in which project his intimate friend Dryden was a principal assistant. It may be remarked, to the praise of Roscommon, that he was the first critic who had taste and spirit enough publicly to praise the "Paradise Lost."—*Warton*.

His imagination might have probably been more fruitful and sprightly if his judgment had been less severe; but that severity, delivered in a masculine, clear, succinct style, contributed to make him so eminent in the didactical manner, that no man can with justice affirm he was ever equalled by any of our own nation, without confessing at the same time that he is inferior to none.—*Fenton*.

In all Charles's days

Roscommon only boasts unspotted lays.—*Pope*.

He is the only correct writer in verse before Addison.—*Johnson*.

It was my Lord Roscommon's "Essay on Translated Verse" which made me uneasy till I tried whether or no I was capable of following his rules, and of reducing the speculation into practice.—*Dryden*.

## Sir Charles Sedley.

1639–1701.

One of the most brilliant and profligate wits of the Restoration. The licentiousness of his writings is not redeemed by

much\* grace or vivacity ; but the charms of his conversation were acknowledged even by sober men who had no esteem for his character. To sit near him at the theatre, and to hear his criticisms on a new play, was regarded as a privilege. Dryden had done him the honour to make him a principal interlocutor in the dialogue on dramatic poetry.—*Macaulay.*

Pierce do tell me among other news the late frolick and debauchery of Sir Charles Sedley<sup>1</sup> and Buckhurst running up and down all the night, almost naked through the streets ; and at last fighting and being beat by the watch and clapped up all night, and how the king takes their part ; and my Lord Chief Justice Keeling hath laid the constable by the heels to answer it next session, which is a horrid shame.—*Pepys.*

### Thomas Shadwell.

1640–1692.

I do not pretend to determine how great a poet Shadwell may be, but I am sure he is an honest man.—*Earl of Dorset.*

If Shadwell had burnt all he wrote, and printed all he spoke, he would have had more wit and humour than any other poet.—*Earl of Rochester.*

Now stop your noses, readers, all and some,  
For here's a tun of midnight work to come :  
Og, from a treason-tavern rolling home,  
Round as a globe and liquor'd every chink,  
Goodly and great he sails behind his link :  
With all this bulk there's nothing lost in Og,  
For every inch that is not fool is rogue :  
A monstrous mass of foul corrupted matter,  
As all the devils had spued to make the batter.  
When wine has given him courage to blaspheme  
He curses God : but God before cursed him.

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<sup>1</sup> Of Farquhar, another dramatist of the Restoration, Horace Walpole says : "Farquhar's plays talk the language of a marching regiment in country quarters." Johnson : "I think Farquhar a man whose writings have considerable merit." Pope : "What pert low dialogue has Farquhar writ !" James Prior : "His genius for comedy was not excelled by either Congreve or Sheridan." And Lord Lytton : "Farquhar is the Fielding of the drama."

And if man could have reason, none has more  
 That made his paunch so rich, and him so poor.  
 With wealth he was not trusted, for heaven knew  
 What 'twas of old to pamper up a Jew ;  
 To what would he on quail and pheasant swell,  
 That e'en on tripe and carrion could rebel ?  
 But though heaven made him poor, with rev'rence speaking,  
 He never was a poet of God's making.  
 • The midwife laid her hand on his thick skull,  
 With this prophetic blessing—Be thou dull !—*Dryden.*<sup>1</sup>

He was an accomplished observer of human nature, had a ready power of seizing the ridiculous in the manners of the times, was a man of sense and information, and displayed in his writings a very considerable fund of humour.—*Sir Egerton Brydges, "Retrospective Review."*

## William Wycherley.

1640–1715.

Translated into real life the characters of . . . Wycherley's dramas are profligates and strumpets—the business of their brief existence the undivided pursuit of lawless gallantry. No other spring of action, or possible motive of conduct, is recognised ; principles which, universally acted upon, must reduce this frame of things to a chaos. But we do them wrong in so translating them. No such effects are produced in *their* world. When we are among them, we are amongst a chaotic people. We are not to judge them by our usages. No reverend institutions are insulted by their proceedings, for they have none among them. No peace of families is violated, for no family ties exist among them. No purity of the marriage bed is stained, for none is supposed to have a being. No deep affections are disquieted—no holy wedlock-bands are snapped asunder ; for affection's depth and wedded faith are not of the growth of that soil. There is neither right nor wrong—gratitude or its opposite—claim or duty—paternity or son-ship. Of what consequence is it to virtue, or how is she at all concerned about it, whether Sir Simeon or Dapperwit

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<sup>1</sup> Shadwell is also the hero of "*Macfleecnoe*."—ED.

steal away Miss Martha ; or who is the father of Lord Froth's or Sir Paul Pliant's children ?—*Lamb*.

Wycherley's indecency is protected against the critics as a skunk is protected against the hunters. It is safe, because it is too filthy to handle, and too noisome even to approach.—*Macaulay*.

Thou, whom the Nine with Plautus' wit inspire,  
The art of Terence, and Menander's fire ;  
Whose sense instructs us, and whose humour charms,  
Whose judgment sways us, and whose spirit warms !  
Oh ! skill'd in nature !—*Pope*.<sup>1</sup>

Of all our modern wits, none seem to me  
Once to have touch'd upon true comedy,  
But hasty Shadwell and slow Wycherley.—*Rochester*.

Wycherley earns hard whate'er he gains.—*Ibid*.

The satire, wit and strength of manly Wycherley.—*Dryden*.

The very *rinsings* of Wycherley's plays have a raciness in them that is indestructible.—*T. Moore*.

In Mr. Wycherley everything is masculine : his muse is not led forth as to a review, but as to a battle ; not adorned for parade, but for execution ; he would be tried by the sharpness of his blade and not by the finery ; like your hero of antiquity, he charges his iron and seems to despise all ornament but intrinsic merit ; and like those heroes, has therefore added another name to his own, and by the unanimous consent of his contemporaries is distinguished by the just appellation of Manly Wycherley.—*Lord Lansdowne*.

<sup>1</sup> At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley, a man who seems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been esteemed without virtue, and caressed without good nature. Pope was proud of his notice. Wycherley wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himself, and they agreed for awhile to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learnt the cant of an author, and began to treat critics with contempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them. But the fondness of Wycherley was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such that he submitted some poems to his revision ; and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted ; but Pope always considered him with kindness ; and visited him a little before he died.—*Johnson's "Life of Pope."*

Wycherley was ambitious of the reputation of wit and libertinism; and he attained it; he was probably capable of reaching the fame of true comedy and instructive ridicule.—*Hume*.

Wycherley, Dryden, Mrs. Centlivre, &c., wrote as if they had only lived in the "Rose Tavern;" but then the Court lived in Drury Lane too; and Lady Dorchester and Nell Gwynne were equally good company.—*Horace Walpole*.

Wycherley had such a bad memory that the same chain of thoughts would return to his mind at the distance of two or three years, without his remembering that it had been there before. Thus, perhaps, he would write one year an encomium on avarice, and a year or two after in dispraise of liberality; and in both the words only would differ, but the thoughts be as much alike as two medals of different metals out of the same mould. It is to the credit of James II. that he was so much pleased with Wycherley's comedy of the "Plain Dealer," that he released him from prison, where he had been confined seven years, by paying his debts, and settled on him a pension of 200*l.* a year.—"*Percy Anecdotes*."

## Dr. William Sherlock.

1641-1707.

Sherlock was a wretched fellow—a genuine son of the Church—a Vicar of Bray—a trimmer and time-server, like Bishop Sprat, though not quite so barefaced; a thick-and-thin advocate of the *jure divino* as existing in that miserable man James II., and after a little coquetry, a mean and slavish adherent of William III.; and all for preferment—in other words, money and power. He would have submitted to circumcision and turned Mahomedan had the faith of the prophet suddenly taken root in England and superseded the Christian—*Charles Ollier*, "*Hunt's Correspondence*."

He was not of the first rank among his contemporaries as a scholar, as a preacher, as a writer on theology, or as a writer on politics; but in all the four characters he had distinguished himself. The perspicuity and liveliness of his style have been praised by Prior and Addison. The facility and assiduity with which he wrote are sufficiently proved by the bulk and the dates of his works. There were, indeed, among the clergy,

men of brighter genius, and men of wider attainments ; but during a long period there was none who more completely represented the order, none who, on all subjects, spoke more precisely the sense of the Anglican priesthood, without any taint of Latitudinarianism, of Puritanism, or of Popery. He had in the days of the Exclusion Bill, when the power of the Dissenters was very great in Parliament and in the country, written strongly against the sin of Nonconformity. When the Rye House Plot was detected, he had zealously defended by tongue and pen the doctrine of non-resistance. His services to the cause of episcopacy and monarchy were so highly valued that he was made Master of the Temple. A pension was also bestowed on him by Charles ; but that pension James soon took away ; for Sherlock, though he held himself bound to pay passive obedience to the civil power, held himself equally bound to combat religious errors, and was the keenest and most laborious of that host of controversialists who, in the day of peril, manfully defended the Protestant faith.—*Macaulay.*

When Sherlock was promoted to the Mastership of the Temple, he was only in the 26th year of his age. So early an elevation gave some offence ; yet it took place at a time when preferments were not lightly bestowed ; and Mr. Sherlock in a short time exhibited such talents as removed all prejudices against him. He exerted the utmost diligence in the cultivation of his talents, and the display of his learning and eloquence ; and in the course of a few years became one of the most celebrated preachers of the time. Notwithstanding some degree of natural impediment (what is called a thickness of speech) he delivered his sermons with such propriety and energy as to rivet the attention of his hearers, and command their admiration.—“ *Percy Anecdotes.*”

### Sir Isaac Newton.

1642-1727.

In the whole of his air and face there was nothing of that penetrating sagacity which appears in his compositions ; he had something rather languid in his look and manner, which did not raise any great expectation in those who did not know him.—*Atterbury.*

He was a man of no very promising aspect. . . . He spoke

little in company, so that his conversation was not agréable.—*Hearne.*

Newton is a nice man to deal with, and a little too apt to raise in himself suspicions where there is no ground.—*Locke.*

A monument to Newton ! a monument to Shakspeare ! Look up to heaven—look into the human heart ; till the planets and the passions—the affections and the fixed stars are extinguished, their names cannot die.—*Professor Wilson.*

The improvements which others have made in natural and mathematical knowledge have so vastly increased in his hands as to afford at once a wonderful instance how great the capacity is of a human soul, and how inexhaustible the subject of its inquiries ; so true is that remark in Holy Writ, that though a wise man seek to find out the works of God from the beginning to the end, yet shall he not be able to do so.—*John Hughes, "Spectator."*

One of the most sagacious men in this age, who continues, I hope, to improve and adorn it, Samuel Johnson, remarked in my hearing, that if Newton had flourished in ancient Greece, he would have been worshipped as a divinity.—*Sir Wm. Jones.*

In a Latin conversation with the Père Boscovich, at the house of Mrs. Cholmondeley, I heard him maintain the superiority of Sir Isaac Newton over all foreign philosophers, with a dignity and eloquence that surprised that learned foreigner.—*Maxwell, on Dr. Johnson.*

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night :  
God said, *let Newton be !* and all was light.—*Pope.*

In Newton this island may boast of having produced the rarest and greatest genius that ever arose for the ornament and instruction of the species. Cautious in admitting no principles but such as were founded in experiment ; but resolute to adopt every such principle, however new and unusual ; from modesty, ignorant of his superiority to the rest of mankind, and thence less careful to accommodate his reasonings to common apprehensions ; more anxious to merit than to acquire fame ; he was from these causes long unknown to the world ; but his reputation at last broke out with a lustre which scarce any writer during his own lifetime had ever before attained. While Newton seemed to draw off the veil from some of the mysteries of Nature, he showed, at the same time, the imperfections of mechanical philosophy ; and thereby restored her ultimate

secrets to that obscurity in which they ever are and ever will remain.—*David Hume, "History of England."*

In Isaac Newton two kinds of intellectual power, which have little in common, and which are not often found together in a very high degree of vigour, but which are equally necessary in the most sublime department of physics, were united as they have never been united before or since. There may have been minds as happily constituted as his for the cultivation of pure mathematical science; there may have been minds as happily constituted for the cultivation of science purely experimental; but in no other mind have the demonstrative faculty and the inductive faculty co-existed in such supreme excellence and perfect harmony. Perhaps in an age of Scotists and Thomists, even his intellect might have run to waste, as many intellects ran to waste which were inferior only to his. Happily the spirit of the age in which his lot was cast, gave the right direction to his mind; and his mind reacted with tenfold force on the spirit of the age.—*Macaulay, "History of England."*

"1692: February 3rd.—What I heard to-day I must relate. There is one Mr. Newton (whom I have very often seen), Fellow of Trinity College, that is mighty famous for his learning, being a most excellent mathematician, philosopher, divine, &c. . . . Of all the books he ever wrote there was one of colours and light, established upon thousands of experiments, which he had been twenty years making, and which had cost him many hundreds of pounds. This book, which he valued so much, and which was so much talked of, had the ill-luck to perish and be utterly lost, just when the learned author was almost at pushing a conclusion to the same, after this manner:—In a winter's morning, leaving it among his other papers on his study table, whilst he went to chapel, the candle, which he had unfortunately left burning there too, caught hold by some means of other papers, and they fired the aforesaid book, and utterly consumed it and several other valuable writings, and, which is most wonderful, did no further mischief. But when Mr. Newton came from chapel, and had seen what was done, every one thought he would have run mad; he was so troubled thereat that he was not himself for a month after."—*De la Pryme's "Diary."*

His carriage was very meek, sedate, and humble; never seeming angry, of profound thought, his countenance mild, pleasant, and comely. He always kept close to his studies,



very rarely went a visiting, excepting two or three persons, Mr. Ellis, Mr. Laughton, of Trinity, and Mr. Vigum, a chemist, in whose society he took much delight and pleasure at an evening when he came to wait upon him. I never knew him to take any recreation or pastime, either in riding out to take the air, walking, bowling, or any other exercise whatever; thinking all hours lost that were not spent in his studies, to which he kept so close that he seldom left his chamber, except at term time, when he read in the schools, as being Lucasianus professor; where so few went to hear him, and fewer that understood him, that oftentimes he did in a manner, for want of hearers, read to the walls. . . . Foreigners he received with a great deal of candour and respect. When invited to a treat, which was very seldom, he used to return it very handsomely, and with much satisfaction to himself. So intent, so serious upon his studies, that he ate very sparingly, nay, oftentimes he has forgot to eat at all; so that going into his chamber I have found his mess untouched, of which, when I have reminded him, he would reply, "Have I?" and then making to the table would eat a bit or two standing; for I cannot say I ever saw him sit at table by himself. . . . I cannot say I ever saw him drink either wine, ale, or beer, excepting at meals, and then very sparingly. He very rarely went to dine at the hall, except on some public days; and then, if he has not been minded, would go very carelessly with shoes down at heel, stockings untied, surplice on, and his hair scarcely combed. . . . In his chamber he walked so very much that you might have thought him to be educated at Athens among the Aristotelian sect.—*Humphrey Newton*, 1683.

When he had friends to entertain, if he went into his study to fetch a bottle of wine, there was danger of his forgetting them. He would sometimes put on his surplice to go to St. Mary's church. When he was going home to Cottesworth from Grantham, he once led his horse up Spittlegate Hill, at the town end; when he designed to remount, his horse had slipped the bridle and gone away without his perceiving it, and he had only the bridle in his hand all the while.—*Dr. Stukeley*.

He was insidious, ambitious, and excessively covetous of praise; and impatient of contradiction.—*Flamsteed*.

## Bishop Burnet.

1643-1715.

I writ with design to make both myself and my readers better and wiser, and to lay open the good and bad of all sides and parties, as clearly and impartially as I myself understood it, concealing nothing that I thought fit to be known, and representing things in their natural colours, without art or disguise; without any regard to kindred or friends, to parties or interests. For I do solemnly say this to the world, and make my humble appeal upon it, to the great God of truth, that I tell the truth on all occasions as fully and freely as upon my best inquiry I have been able to find it out.—*Burnet*.

Burnet's "History of His Own Times" is very entertaining. The style indeed is mere chit-chat. I do not believe that Burnet intentionally lied; but he was so much prejudiced that he took no pains to find out the truth. He is like a man who is resolved to regulate his time by a certain watch, but will not inquire whether the watch be right or not.—*Johnson*.

His personal resentment put him upon writing history. He relates the actions of a persecutor and a benefactor; and it is easy to believe that a man in such circumstances must violate the laws of truth. The remembrance of his injuries is always present, and gives venom to his pen. Let us add to this that intemperate and malicious curiosity which penetrates into the most private recesses of vice.—*Hampton*.

A portly prince, and goodly to the sight,  
He seemed a son of Anach, for his height;  
Like those whom stature did to crowns prefer;  
Black-browed and bluff, like Hæmer's Jupiter:  
Broad-backed, and brawny-built, for love's delight,  
A prophet form'd to make a female proselyte;  
A theologue more by need than genial bent,  
By breeding sharp, by nature confident.  
Interest in all his actions was discern'd,  
More learn'd than honest, more a wit than learn'd.

*Dryden, "The Hind and the Panther."*

His conversation was singularly deficient in the art of address; his sincerity was involuntary, and in certain situations provokingly intrusive. His love of politics, in which he took,

perhaps, too great a share for one concerned in affairs of far higher importance, was derived, according to his own account, from the conversation of his father, who had the same fondness for politics as the excellent prelate himself, and whose arguments and anecdotes engendered that taste in the mind of his son. The character of Burnet, written by the Marquis of Halifax, and given by that nobleman himself to the Bishop, portrays with much delicacy of touch, and probably in not too severe a light, both the brilliant parts and the strong shadows of Burnet's mind: it brings to view the singleness of heart, the impetuosity of temper, the quickness to be offended, the readiness to forgive, the disinterestedness, the Christian heroism, which were offensive to lesser men from the high example which they presented, and which could not, without more inconvenience to selfish minds, be imitated.—“*Memoirs of Duchess of Marlborough.*”

The fame of Burnet has been attacked with singular malice and pertinacity. The attack began early in his life, and is still carried on with undiminished vigour, though he has now been more than a century and a quarter in his grave. He is, indeed, as fair a mark as factious animosity and petulant wit could desire. The faults of his understanding and temper lie on the surface, and cannot be missed. They are not the faults which are ordinarily considered as belonging to his country. Alone, among the many Scotchmen who have raised themselves to distinction and prosperity in England, he had that character which satirists, novelists, and dramatists, have agreed to ascribe to Irish adventurers. His high animal spirits, his boastfulness, his undissembled vanity, his propensity to blunder, his provoking indiscretion, his unabashed audacity, afforded inexhaustible subjects of ridicule to the Tories. Nor did his enemies omit to compliment him, with more pleasantry than delicacy, on the breadth of his shoulders, the thickness of his calves, and his success in matrimonial projects on amorous and opulent widows. Yet Burnet, though open in many respects, to ridicule, was no contemptible man.—*Macaulay*, “*History of England.*”

I do not think he designedly published anything he believed to be false.—*Dartmouth.*

He was a man of generosity and good-nature.—*Dean Swift.*

Fox considered Burnet's style to be perfect. We were once talking of our historian's introducing occasionally the words of

other writers into his works without marking them as quotations, when Fox said, "that the style of some of the authors so treated might need a little mending, but that Burnet's required none."—*Sam. Rogers, "Table Talk."*

One of the best and worst friends that I know.—*Tillotson.*

I knew Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury ; he was a famous party man, and easily imposed upon by any lying spirit of his own faction ; but he was a better pastor than any man who is now seated on the bishop's bench. Although he left a large family when he died, yet he left them nothing more than their mother's fortune. He always declared that he should think himself guilty of the greatest crime if he was to raise fortunes for his children out of the revenue of his bishoprick.—*Dr. King.*

We are apt to mistake, or dissemble at least, even to ourselves, our true principles of action. Bishop Burnet professes to write his "History of His Own Time" for public ends, *pro bono publico*. This might be one inducement, but who sees not that the main motive for engaging in that work was a love of prate, a busy, meddling humour to pry into State secrets, and the vanity of disclosing the part which he had, or fancied he had, in them ? He had sense and honesty, but was warped in his judgment of men and things, as most men are, by strong prejudices, and a heat of temper that sometimes looks fanatical. As a writer he is not very respectable.—*Dr. Hurd.*

## Afra Behn.

1646-8-1689.

She had a great command of the stage, and I often wondered that she should bury her favourite hero<sup>1</sup> in a novel, when she might have revived him in a scene. She thought either that no actor could represent him, or she could not bear him represented ; and I believed the last, when I remember what I have heard from a friend of hers, that she always told his history more feelingly than she wrote it.—*Thomas Southerne.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This favourite hero was Oroonoko, a native chief of Surinam, where Mrs. Behn was reared. Southerne's play of "Oroonoko" is founded on this hero of the licentious novelist.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> Southerne, remembered perhaps by one only of his numerous plays, "Isabella ; or, the Fatal Marriage." Dryden compared him to Terence :—

Some hands write some things well, are elsewhere<sup>1</sup> lame,  
 But on all themes your powers are the same ;  
 Of buskin and of sock you know the pace,  
 And tread in both with equal skill and grace.  
 But when you write of love, Astræa, then  
 Love dips his arrows where you wet your pen.  
 Such charming lines did never paper grace,  
 Soft as your sex and smooth as beauty's face.

*Charles Cotton.<sup>1</sup>*

Two warrior chiefs<sup>2</sup> the voice of Fame divide,  
 Who best deserv'd not Plutarch could decide.  
 Behold two mightier conquerors appear,  
 Some for your wit, some for your eyes declare ;  
 Debates arise which captivate us most,  
 And none can tell the charm by which he's lost ;  
 The bow and quiver does Diana bear,  
 Venus the dove, Pallas the shield and spear ;  
 Poets such emblems to their gods assign,  
 Hearts bleeding by the dart and pen be thine.

*Lord Lansdowne.*

A grand-aunt of my own, Mrs. Keith, of Ravelstone, who was a person of some condition, being a daughter of Sir John Swinton, of Swinton, lived with unabated vigour of intellect to a very advanced age. She was very fond of reading, and enjoyed it to the last of her long life. One day she asked me, when we happened to be alone together, whether I had ever seen Mrs. Behn's novels? I confessed the charge.—Whether I could get her a sight of them? I said, with some hesitation, I believed I could; but that I did not think she would like either the manners, or the language, which approached too near that of Charles II.'s time to be quite proper reading. "Nevertheless," said the good old lady, "I remember them being so

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"Yet those who blame thy tale applaud thy wit ;  
 So Terence plotted and so Terence writ.  
 Like his thy thoughts are true, thy language clean,  
 E'en lewdness is made moral in thy scene."

Pope has celebrated him as—

"Tom, whom<sup>c</sup> heaven sent down to raise  
 The price of prologues and of plays."—ED.

<sup>1</sup> "Cheerful, hearty Mr. Cotton."—*Charles Lamb.*

<sup>2</sup> Alexander and Cæsar.—*Lansdowne.*

much admired, and being so much interested in them myself, that I wish to look at them again." To hear was to obey. So I sent Mrs. Aphra Behn curiously sealed up, with "private and confidential" on the packet, to my gay old grand-aunt. The next time I saw her afterwards she gave me back Aphra, properly wrapped up, with nearly these words :—"Take back your bonny Mrs. Behn, and if you will take my advice, put her in the fire ; for I found it impossible to get through the very first novel. But is it not," she said, "a very odd thing, that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London?"—*Sir Walter Scott.*

The stage how loosely does Astrea tread,  
Who fairly puts all characters to bed !—*Pope.*

### Earl of Rochester.

1647-1680.

WILKINSON, Earl of Rochester, was naturally modest till the court corrupted him. His wit had in it a peculiar brightness to which none could ever arrive. He gave himself up to all sorts of extravagance, and to the wildest frolics that a wanton wit could devise. He would have gone about the streets as a beggar, and made love as a porter. He set up a stage as an Italian mountebank. He was for some years always drunk, and was ever doing some mischief. The king loved his company for the diversion it afforded, better than his person ; and there was no love lost between them. He took his revenges in many libels. He found out a footman that knew all the court, and he furnished him with a red coat and a musket as a sentinel, and kept him all the winter long every night at the doors of such ladies as he believed might be in intrigues. In the court a sentinel is little minded, and is believed to be posted by a captain of the guards to hinder a combat : so this man saw who walked about and visited at forbidden hours. In the last year of his life I was much with him, and have writ a book of what pass'd between him and me. I do verily believe he was then so entirely changed, that, if he had recovered, he would have made good all his resolutions.—*Burnet.*

Lord Rochester was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many wild pranks and sallies of extravagance. The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings; the compositions of a man whose name was heard so often were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applause.—*Johnson.*

Rochester I despise for want of wit.—*Dryden.*

Sometimes he has some humour, never wit,  
And if it rarely, very rarely, hit;  
'Tis under so much nasty rubbish laid  
To find it out 's the cinder-woman's trade.'—*Ibid.*

His poetical genius is justly celebrated by Voltaire.—*Dr. Maclaine.*

Rochester had much energy in his thought and diction, and though the ancient satirists often used great liberty in their expressions, yet, as the ingenious historian observes, "Their freedom no more resembles the license of Rochester than the nakedness of an Indian does that of a common prostitute." (Hume).—*Warton.*

The impurity of Rochester is too disgusting to do harm.—*Caleb Colton.*

The very name of Rochester is offensive to modest ears; yet does his poetry discover such energy of style and such poignancy of satire, as give ground to imagine what so fine a genius, had he fallen in a more happy age, and had followed better examples, was capable of producing.—*Hume.*

<sup>1</sup> In addition to this character he was wanting in courage. Johnson tells us that he was reproached for slinking away in street quarrels, and leaving his comrades to help themselves as they might. The Duke of Buckingham averred that he had refused to fight him. Johnson quotes some lines which sufficiently confirm the account of his cowardice:—

He who can push into a midnight fray  
His brave companion, and then run away,  
Leaving him to be murder'd in the street,  
Then put it off by some buffoon conceit;  
Him thus dishonour'd for a wit you own,  
And court him as top fiddler of the town.—*Ed.*

## Elkanah Settle.

1648-1724.

He's an animal of a most deplored understanding, without reading and conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense and some glimmering of thought which he never can fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that for want of learning and elocution he will never be able to express anything either naturally or justly.—*Dryden*.

We have no City poet now; that is an office which has gone into disuse. The last was Elkanah Settle. There is something in *names* which one cannot help feeling. Now *Elkanah Settle* sounds so *queer*, who can expect much from that name? We should have no hesitation to give it for John Dryden in preference to Elkanah Settle, from the names only, without knowing their different merits.—*John Wilkes*.

Poor Elkanah! all other changes past,  
For bread in Smithfield dragons hiss'd at last;  
Spit streams of fire to make the butchers gape,  
And found his manners suited to his shape.—*Young*.

Elkanah Settle was one of those unfortunate individuals whom Nature had designed for a peaceful and honourable oblivion, but whose perversity of temperament doom them to an inheritance of everlasting ridicule. He entertained a steadfast antipathy to Dryden. This antipathy Dryden condescended to reciprocate. Settle was a zealous Whig and poet-laureate to the City of London. It is related that the Whigs entrusted to him the management of a procession which had its climax in the burning of the Pope in effigy. Shaftesbury, whose declining influence began to render him an inconvenient friend, had long been his patron. The philosophical politician was accordingly doomed to his last humiliation—he was abandoned by Settle! About the same time Tory principles began very inopportunately to predominate among the majority of the city. A crisis was clearly at hand; but Elkanah was prepared to meet it. The anti-papal procession, the patronage of Shaftesbury, the Whig



songs, and some other unfortunate antecedents, were forthwith obliterated ; and Settle appeared before the City of London metamorphosed into a Tory parasite. He had vehemently declaimed against the profanity and immorality of the stage ; yet so truly in his case was necessity without its law, that the Revolution drove him to write plays for puppet-shows. His earlier days had been thrown into the strife of literary warfare, and his later years were spent in mounting the stage at the fairs and combating with wooden performers. The unhappy man was at length admitted to the Charter House, whither he finally retired from the toils of literary ambition and the toils of battle at the puppet-show.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1855.

### John, Lord Somers.

1650–1716.

He had traversed the whole vast range of polite literature, ancient and modern. He was at once a munificent and a severely judicious patron of genius and learning. Locke owed opulence to Somers. By Somers, Addison was drawn forth from a cell in a college. In distant countries the name of Somers was mentioned with respect and gratitude by great scholars and poets who had never seen his face. He was the benefactor of Leclerc. He was the friend of Filicaja. Neither political nor religious difficulties prevented him from extending his powerful protection to merit. Hickes, the fiercest and most intolerant of all the non-jurors, obtained, by the influence of Somers, permission to study Teutonic antiquities in freedom and safety. Vertue, a strict Roman Catholic, was raised by the discriminating and liberal patronage of Somers, from poverty and obscurity to the first rank among the engravers of the age.—*Macaulay*.

Your lordship appears as great in your private life as in the most important offices which you have borne. I would therefore rather choose to speak of the pleasure you afford all who are admitted into your conversation, of your elegant taste in all the polite parts of learning, of your great humanity and complacency of manners, and of the surprising influence which is peculiar to you in making every one who converses with your lordship prefer you to himself, without thinking the less meanly of his talents.—*Addison*.

Having a strong bent towards literature, as well as a keen manly interest in the vital questions which concerned the liberties of England under Charles II., he distinguished himself by political tracts which maintained constitutional rights. He rose at the bar to honour and popularity. . . . He was active in co-operation with those who were planning the expulsion of the Stuarts, and the bringing over of the Prince of Orange.—*Professor Morley.*

For worthy of the wise  
 Nothing can seem but virtue, nor earth yield  
 Their fame an equal field,  
 Save where impartial Freedom gives the prize ;  
 There Somers fixed his name,  
 Enroll'd the next to William ; there shall Time  
 To every wondering clime  
 Point out that Somers, who, from Faction's crowd  
 The sland'rous and the loud  
 Could fair assent and modest reverence claim.

*Akenside.*

Of Lord Somers, indeed, we can scarcely be said to know anything at all. That he was a person of unimpeachable integrity, a judge of great capacity and learning, a firm friend of liberty, but a cautious and safe counsellor in most difficult emergencies, all are ready to acknowledge. But the authority which he possessed among his contemporaries, the influence which his sound and practical wisdom exercised over their proceedings, the services which he was thus enabled to render in steering the constitution safe through the most trying times, and saving us from arbitrary power without paying the price of our liberties in anarchy and bloodshed ; nay, conducting the whole violent proceedings of a revolution in all the deliberation and almost in the forms of an ordinary legal proceeding—have surrounded his name with a mild yet imperishable glory, which in the contrast of our dark ignorance respecting all the particulars and details of his life, gives the figure something altogether mysterious and ideal.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1838.

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## Sir Richard Blackmore.

1650-1726.

His name was so long used to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at last a bye-word of contempt.—*Johnson.*

Of Blackmore's attainments in the ancient tongues, it may be sufficient to say that in his prose he has confounded an aphorism with an apophthegm, and that when in his verse he treats of classical subjects, his habit is to regale his readers with four false quantities to a page.—*Macaulay.*

'Twas in his carriage the sublime  
Sir Richard Blackmore used to rhyme,  
And (if the wits don't do him wrong)  
'Twixt death and epics pass'd his time,  
Scribbling and killing all day long.—*Moore.*

... Sir Richard Blackmore, who, though he shines in his poem called "Creation," has written more absurdities in verse than any writer of our country.—*William Cowper.*

Mr. Churchill favoured me with the present of Sir R. Blackmore's "King Arthur." I had read "King Arthur" before, and read it with admiration, which is not at all weakened by this second piece. All our English poets (except Milton) have been mere ballad-makers in comparison with him.—*Molyneux to Locke.*

Though Sir R. B.'s vein in poetry be what everybody must allow him to have an extraordinary talent in, and though with you I exceedingly valued his first preface, yet I must own to you there was nothing I so much admired him for as for what he says of hypotheses in his last. It seems to me so right, and is yet so much out of the way of the ordinary writers and practitioners in that faculty, that it shows as great a strength and penetration of judgment as his poetry has shown flight of fancy.—*Locke to Molyneux.*

I cannot conclude this book upon the "Creation" without mentioning a poem which has lately appeared under that title. The work was undertaken with so good an intention, and is executed with so great a mastery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble productions in our English verse. The reader cannot but be pleased to find the

depths of philosophy enlivened with all the charms of poetry, and to see so great a strength of reason amidst so beautiful a redundancy of the imagination.<sup>1</sup>—*Addison*, "*Spectator*," No. 339.

Sir Richard Blackmore's notion of wit is, that it is a series of high and exalted ferments. It very possibly *may* be ; but not exactly comprehending what is meant by a "series of high and exalted ferments," I do not think myself bound to waste much time in criticising the metaphysics of this learned physician.—*Sydney Smith*.

He was a thorough Whig, earnestly religious, and given to the production of heroic poems. Steele shared his principles, and honoured his sincerity.—*Professor Morley*.

Mortal, how darest thou with such lines address  
My awful seat, and trouble my recess ?  
In Essex marshy hundreds is a cell  
Where lazy fogs and drizzly vapours dwell ;  
Thither raw damp on drooping wings repair,  
And shivering quartans shake the sickly air.  
There, when fatigu'd, some silent hours I pass,  
And substitute physicians in my place.  
'Then dare not, for the future, once rehearse  
The dissonance of such untuneful verse ;  
But in your lines let energy be found,  
And learn to rise in sense and sink in sound.—*Garth*.

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<sup>1</sup> Blackmore's "Creation" appeared in 1712. Dennis, the arch-critic of the day, was equally loud with Addison in its praise. "It is," says he, "a philosophical poem which has equalled that of Lucretius in the beauty of its versification, and infinitely surpassed it in the solidity and strength of its reasoning." "Had Blackmore," says Johnson, "written nothing else, it would have transmitted him to posterity among the first favourites of the English muse." According to Ambrose Phillips, "Blackmore as he proceeded in this poem laid his manuscript from time to time before a club of wits with whom he associated, and every man contributed as he could either improvement or correction ; so that there are perhaps nowhere in the book thirty lines together that now stand as they were originally written." The idea was ingenious. Blackmore might lose the credit of originality ; but he was at least certain of praise from all who had given their corrections.—*ED*.

## Jeremy Collier.

1650-1726.

Jeremy Collier was a clergyman of the Church of England, bred at Cambridge. His talents and attainments were such as might have been expected to raise him to the highest honours of his profession. He had an extensive knowledge of books. . . His notions touching holy orders, Episcopal government, the efficacy of the sacraments, the guilt of schism, the importance of vestments, ceremonies, and solemn days, differed little from those which are now held by Dr. Pusey and Mr. Newman. . . In 1698 Collier published his "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage." . . . There is hardly any book of that time from which it would be possible to select specimens of writing so excellent and so various. To compare Collier with Pascal would indeed be absurd; yet we hardly know where, except in the "Provincial Letters," we can find mirth so harmoniously and becomingly blended with solemnity, as in the "Short View."—*Macaulay*.

Jeremy Collier fought without a rival; and, therefore, could not claim a victory.—*Fohnson*.

I will not say, The zeal of God's house has eaten him up; but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility.—*Dryden*.

He was formed for a controvertist: with sufficient learning; with diction vehement and pointed, though often vulgar and incorrect; with unconquerable pertinacity; with wit in the highest degree keen and sarcastic; and with all those powers exalted and invigorated by just confidence in his cause. Thus qualified, and thus incited, he walked out to battle, and assailed at once most of the living writers, from Dryden to D'Urfey. His onset was violent; those passages which, whilst they stood single, excited little notice, when they were accumulated and exposed together, excited horror; the wise and the pious caught the alarm; and the nation wondered why it had so long suffered irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the public charge.—*Fohnson*, "*Life of Congreve*."

If I do not return him civilities in calling him names, it is because I am not very well versed in his nomenclatures. . . . I will only call him Mr. Collier, and that I will call him as often

as I think he shall deserve it. The corruption of a rotten divine is the generation of a sour critic.—*Congreve*.

## Thomas Otway.

1651-1685.

Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear zany,  
And swears for heroics he writes best of any ;  
"Don Carlos" his pockets so amply had fill'd  
That his mange was cured, and his lice were all kill'd.  
But Apollo had seen his face on the stage,  
And prudently did not think fit to engage  
The scum of a play-house for the prop of an age.

*Rochester, "Session of the Poets."*

Otway had a genius finely turned to the pathetic ; but he neither observes strictly the rules of the drama, nor the rules, still more essential, of propriety and decorum.—*Hume*.

Exact Racine and Corneille's noble fire  
Showed us that France has something to admire.  
Not but the tragic spirit was our own,  
And full in Shakspeare, fair in Otway shone ;  
But Otway fail'd to polish or refine.—*Pope*.

Otway's pretensions to mere poetry were very slight ; and his lyrical pieces are entirely worthless. What he did, he effected by a strong contrast of character, by spirited dialogue, and by always keeping in view the main object of the play, He did not dally with his subject, nor waste his strength in figures and conceits, but went straight to the end and kept expectation alive.—*Lord Jeffrey*.

Otway had not much cultivated versification, nor much replenished his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving the passions, to which Dryden in his latter years left an illustrious testimony. He appears by some of his verses to have been a zealous loyalist, and had what was in those times the common reward of loyalty : he lived and died neglected.—*Johnson*.

More tears have been shed for the sorrows of Belvidera and Monimia, than for those of Juliet and Desdemona.—*Sir Walter Scott*.

## Nahum Tate.

1652-1715.

Nahum Tate, who is ready to take oath that he has caused many reams of verse to be published, whereof both himself and his bookseller (if lawfully required) can still produce authentic copies, and therefore wonders why the world is pleased to make such a secret of it.—*Swift*.

But Tate, alas ! excuse him if you can,  
Is now a scribbler who was once a man.—*Dr. Young*.

The bard whom pilfer'd pastorals renown,  
Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,  
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,  
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year ;  
He who still wanting, though he lived on theft,  
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left :  
And he, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,  
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning :  
And he whose fustian's so sublimely bad  
It is not poetry, but prose run mad :  
All these my modest satire bade translate,  
And own'd that nine such poets made a Tate.<sup>1</sup>—*Pope*.

## Nathaniel Lee.

1655-1691-2.

Your beauteous images must be allowed  
By all but some vile poets of the crowd.  
But how should any sign-post dauber know  
The worth of Titian or of Angelo ?  
Hard features every bungler can command ;  
To draw true beauty shows a master's hand.—*Dryden*.

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<sup>1</sup> Tate is remarkable for two performances : his version of the Psalms, which he produced in concert with Dr. Nicholas Brady, and his continuation of Dryden's satire, "Absalom and Achitophel." He succeeded (1692) Shadwell as poet-laureate, a post of which the salary was 100*l.* a year. He died in extreme indigence in the Mint.—*Ed.*

Of all the dramatic writers since the return of Charles, Lee may be considered as the first. It is true that Otway has constructed the best drama, and the stage is most indebted to him ; but Lee has assuredly more imagination and passion than his rival, although every play which he has written is disgraced by the most unaccountable fustian. There is great beauty and tenderness in "Theodosius ;" and great power mixed with extravagance both in "The Rival Queens" and "The Massacre of Paris," and others.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1823.

Lee was so pathetic a reader of his own scenes, that I have been informed by an actor who was present, that while Lee was reading to Major Mohun at a rehearsal, Mohun, in the warmth of his admiration, threw down his part and said, "Unless I were able to play as well as you read it, to what purpose should I undertake it?" And yet this very author, whose elocution raised such admiration in so capital an actor, when he attempted to be an actor himself, soon quitted the stage in an honest despair of ever making any profitable figure there.—*Colley Cibber*.

When Nathaniel Lee, commonly called the "mad poet," was confined during four years of his short life in Bedlam, a sane idiot of a scribbler mocked his calamity, and observed that it was easy to write like a madman ; Lee answered, "No, sir, it is not so easy to write like a madman ; but very easy to write like a fool."—"*Percy Anecdotes*."

Disappointed of a fellowship at Cambridge, he turned actor ; failed upon the stage, but prospered as a writer for it. His career as a dramatist began with "Nero," in 1675, and he wrote in all eleven plays. His most successful play was the "Rival Queens, or the Death of Alexander the Great," produced in 1677. Next to it in success, and superior in merit, was his "Theodosius, or the Force of Love," produced in 1680. He took part with Dryden in writing the very successful adaptation of "Œdipus," produced in 1670, as an English tragedy, based upon Sophocles and Seneca. During two years of his life Lee was a lunatic in Bedlam.—*H. Morley*.

John Dennis.

1657-1734.

Should Dennis publish you had stabb'd your brother,  
Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother,



Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,  
 Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?  
 On one so poor you cannot take the law,  
 On one so old your sword you scorn to draw;  
 Uncag'd then, let the harmless monster rage,  
 Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age.—*Savage.*

Equal to Boileau in poetry, and superior to him in critical abilities.—*Blackmore.*

One Dennis, commonly called the critic, who had written a threepenny pamphlet against the power of France, being in the country and hearing of a French privateer hovering about the coast, although he were twenty miles from the sea, fled to town and told his friends they need not wonder at his haste, for the King of France, having got intelligence where he was, had sent a privateer on purpose to catch him.—*Swift.*

Dennis had written bad odes, bad tragedies, bad comedies; he had moreover a larger share than most men of those infirmities and eccentricities which excite laughter.—*Macaulay.*

The Grub-street Timon—old John Dennis.—*Thackeray.*

Thou never didst let the sun into thy garret for fear he should bring a bailiff along with him . . . Your years are about sixty-five, an ugly vinegar face, that if you had any command you would be obeyed out of fear, from your ill-nature pictured there; not from any other motive. Your height is about some five feet five inches. You see I can give your exact measure as if I had taken your dimensions with a good cudgel, which I promise you to do so soon as ever I have the good fortune to meet you . . . Your doughty paunch stands before you like a firkin of butter, and your duck legs seem to be cast for carrying burdens. Thy works are libels upon others, and satires upon thyself; and while they bark at men of sense, call him knave and fool that wrote them. Thou hast a great antipathy to thy own species, and hatest the sight of a fool but in thy glass.—*Steele.*

### Montague, Earl of Halifax.

1661–1715.

Fed with soft dedication all day long,  
 Horace and he went hand and hand in song;  
 His library (where busts of poets dead  
 And a true Pindar stood without a head)

Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,  
 Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place ;  
 Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,  
 And flatter'd every day, and some days eat ;  
 Till grown more frugal in his riper days  
 He paid some bards with port, and some with praise ;  
 To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,  
 And others (harder still) he paid in kind.—*Pope.*

Of him, who from a poet became a patron of poets, it will be readily believed that the works would not miss of celebration. Addison began to praise him early, and was followed or accompanied by other poets ; perhaps by all except Swift and Pope, who forbore to flatter him in his life, and after his death spoke of him, Swift with slight censure, and Pope, in the character of Bufo, with acrimonious contempt.—*Dr. Johnson.*

For wit, for humour, and for judgment fam'd.—*Addison.*

'Tis Montagu's rich vein alone must prove

None but a Phidias should attempt a Jove.—*Garth.*

He seems to have died too rich for his honour. He was splendid, however, in his establishment, and his collection of books and objects of art, and his extensive patronage of men of letters, were a credit both to himself and his country ; although it may well be true that "fed with soft dedication all day long" he grew too fond of that inflating food. As a politician, though certainly not free from self-interest, he deserves the praise of enlightened views, manly principles, and an honourable consistency.—*Lucy Aikin.*

Of him as of several of his contemporaries, especially of Mulgrave and Sprat, it may be said that his fame had suffered from the folly of those editors who, down to our time, have persisted in reprinting his rhymes among the works of the British poets. There is not a year in which hundreds of verses as good as he ever wrote are not sent in for the Newdegate prize at Oxford, and for the Chancellor's medal at Cambridge. His mind had indeed great quickness and vigour, but not that kind of vigour and quickness which produces great dramas or odes ; and it is most unjust to him that his "Man of Honour" and his "Epistle on the Battle of the Boyne" should be placed side by side with "Cæsar" or "Alexander's Feast." Other eminent statesmen and orators, Walpole, Pulteney, Chatham, Fox, wrote poetry not better than his. But fortunately for

them, their metrical compositions were never thought worthy to be admitted into any collection of our national classics.—*Macaulay.*

### Bishop Atterbury.

1662–1732.

Urim was civil, and not void of sense,  
Had humour and a courteous confidence ;  
So spruce he moves, so gracefully he cocks  
The hallow'd rose, declares him orthodox.  
He pass'd his easy hours, instead of prayer,  
In madrigals and phillysing the fair ;  
Constant at feasts and each decorum knew,  
And soon as the dessert appear'd withdrew.  
Always obliging and without offence,  
And fancy'd for his gay impertinence.  
But see how ill-mistaken parts succeed !  
He threw off my dominion and would read ;  
Engag'd in controversy, wrangled well,  
In convocation language could excel,  
In volumes prov'd the Church without defence—  
By nothing guarded but by Providence.

*Garth, "The Dispensary."*

If Atterbury was not worse used than any honest man in the world ever was, there were strong contradictions between his public and private character.—*Dr. Herring.*

Sir John Pringle had expressed a wish that I would ask Dr. Johnson's opinion what were the best English sermons for style. . . . "Atterbury?" Johnson : "Yes, Sir, one of the best."—*Boswell.*

A mind inexhaustibly rich in all the resources of controversy, and familiar with the artifices which make falsehood look like truth, and ignorance like knowledge.—*Macaulay.*

He was accustomed to swear on any strong provocation.—*Warton.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "All honour," says an enthusiastic writer, "to the memory of Tom Warton—all honour and love. He was a poet as well as an antiquary, and understood Spenser far better than he thought ; and had he not had, he fear of Aristotle before his eyes, and an awe in his soul, not too profound,

I went to Mr. Pope one morning at Twickenham, and found a large folio Bible with gilt clasps lying before him upon his table; and as I knew his way of thinking upon that book, asked him jocosely if he was going to write an answer to it? "It is a present," said he, "or rather a legacy from my old friend the Bishop of Rochester. I went to take leave of him yesterday in the Tower, where I saw this Bible upon the table. After the first compliments the Bishop said to me, 'My friend Pope, considering your infirmities and my age and exile, it is not likely that we should ever meet again, and therefore I give you this legacy to remember me by it.' 'Does your lordship abide by it yourself?' 'I do.' 'If you do, my lord, it is but lately. May I beg to know what new lights or arguments have prevailed with you now, to entertain an opinion so contrary to that which you entertained of this Book all the former part of your life?' The bishop replied, 'We have not time to talk of these things; but take home the book: I will abide by it, and I recommend you to do so too, and so God bless you.'"—*Chesterfield*.<sup>1</sup>

He has so particular a regard for his congregation that he commits to his memory what he has to say to them; and has so soft and graceful a behaviour, that it must attract your

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for that was impossible, but habitual rather than reflective, for the Greek and Roman genius—the *Classics*—he would have left unsaid many questionable, many important, and many untrue sayings (yet has he said many that are most true) about the 'Faerie Queen.' He was in his day, and is now, one of the brightest ornaments, the greatest glories of Oxford, of her whom Lord Brougham (not in the *Edinburgh Review*) rightly calls that 'old, renowned, and famous university.'—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1835. Johnson had no opinion of Warton as a poet. "Warton's verses are come out," said Mrs. Thrale. "Yes," answered Johnson, "and this frost has struck them in again. Here are some lines I have written to ridicule them; but remember, I love the fellow dearly, for all I laugh at him:—

"Wheresoe'er I turn my view,  
All is strange, yet nothing new;  
Endless labour all along,  
Endless labour to be wrong;  
Phrase that time has flung away,  
Uncouth words in disarray;  
Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet,  
Ode and elegy and sonnet."—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Mahon (in his edition of "*Chesterfield's Letters*") expresses his utter disbelief in this story. "What judicious critic," he inquires, "would weigh in the balance for a moment the veracity of Pope against the piety of Atterbury?"—ED.

attention. His person it must be confessed is no small recommendation ; but he is to be highly commended for not losing that advantage, and adding to a propriety of speech which might pass the criticism of Longinus, an action which would have been approved by Demosthenes. He has a peculiar force in his way, and has many of his audience who could not be intelligent hearers of his discourse, were there no explanations as well as grace in his actions. This art of his is used with the most exact and honest skill. He never attempts your passions till he has convinced your reason. All the objections which you can form are laid open and dispersed before he uses the least vehemence in his sermon ; but when he thinks he has your head, he very soon wins your heart, and never pretends to show the beauty of holiness till he has convinced you of the truth of it.—*Quoted in "Percy Anecdotes."*

To the oases of Tillotson, Sherlock, and Atterbury, we must wade through many a barren page, in which the weary Christian can descry nothing all around him but a dreary expanse of trite sentiments and languid words.—*Sydney Smith.*

A prelate for wit and for eloquence fam'd  
 Apollo soon miss'd, and he needs not be nam'd ;  
 Since amidst a whole bench, of which some are so bright,  
 Not one of them shines as learn'd and polite.

*Duke of Buckingham.*

Is it not known that the moment the queen was expired, Atterbury proposed to go in his lawn sleeves and proclaim the Pretender at Charing Cross, but Bolingbroke's heart failing him, Atterbury swore "There was the best cause in Europe lost for want of spirit !" —*Horace Walpole.*

## Dr. Bentley.

1662–1742.

This man, so deeply versed in ancient learning, it will appear was destitute of taste and genius in his native language.—*I. D'Israeli.*

The originality of Bentley's style, the boldness of his opinions, and his secure reliance upon unfailing stores of learning, all marked him out as a scholar to be ranked with Scaliger, Causabon, and Gataker.—*Monk's "Life of Bentley."*

There is a person styled Dr. Bentley who has written near a thousand pages of immense erudition, giving a true and full account of a certain squabble of wonderful importance between himself and a bookseller; he is a writer of infinite wit and humour; no man rallies with a better grace and in more sprightly turns.—*Swift*.

The mighty scholiast whose unweary'd pains  
Made Horace dull, and humbled Maro's strains;  
Turn what they will to verse, their toil is vain,  
Critics like me shall make it prose again—  
For Attic phrase in Plato let them seek;  
I poach in Suidas for unlicenc'd Greek.—*Pope*.

Swift imbibed from Sir W. Temple, and Pope from Swift, an inveterate aversion and contempt for Bentley, whose admirable "Boyle's Lectures," "Remarks on Collins," emendations of Menander and Callimachus, and Tully's 'Tuscul. Disp., whose erudition of Horace, and, above all, "Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris" (in which he gained the most complete victory over a whole army of wits), all of them exhibit the most striking marks of accurate and extensive erudition, and a vigorous and acute understanding.—*Warton*.

The greatest scholar that had appeared in Europe since the revival of letters.—*Macaulay*.

Was not he the first that discovered the unknown use of the excellent Sir Isaac Newton's "Principia Mathematica," and successfully applied that theory to demonstrate the being of God? Have not all the writers on that subject copied after his "Boyle's Lectures?" And have not the atheists been silent since that time, and sheltered themselves under deism?—"Present State of Trin. Coll. Cam.," 1710.

A mean, dull, unmannerly pedant.—*Sir W. Temple*.

Bentley, long to wrangling schools confined,  
And but by books acquainted with mankind;  
To Milton lending sense, to Horace wit,  
He makes them write what never poet writ.—*Mallet*.

A gentleman who had heard that Bentley was born in the North, said to Porson, "Wasn't he a Scotchman?" "No, Sir," replied Porson, "Bentley was a great Greek scholar."—"Porsoniana."

Vast as was Bentley's reading, none of it was superfluous,

for he turns it all to account; his felicity in fixing his eye at once on what he needed, in always finding the evidence that he wanted, often where no one else would have thought of looking for it, is almost supernatural. His learning suggested all the phrases that might be admitted in any given passage; but his taste did not always lead him to select the best.—*Hartley Coleridge.*

His diction exhibits a grotesque mixture of the pedantic and the familiar, if not the vulgar, and upon the whole must be considered as falling below the standard of good writing at that period. Of the authorized words of the language he makes an unscrupulous choice, and he is too apt to introduce words of his own fabrication. His style may therefore be described, in his own terms, as a putrid *negoce*; but his compositions, nevertheless, possess that charm which is always produced by the characteristic workings of genius.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1830.

He seems to have been the first person who understood the power which may be exercised over literature by a reviewer.—*Dr. Monk.*

Many things now familiar to young academics (thanks to the labours of Dawes, and Burney, and Parr, and Porson, and Elinsley) were utterly unknown to scholars like Bentley, and to Scaliger before him; and though it might seem an ungracious task, it would not be void either of pleasure or of profit to give select specimens of errors in metre and syntax committed by these illustrious men.—*Tate's "Introduction to Greek Tragic and Comic Metres."*

From the perusal of Bentley we now rise, and upon former occasions too we have risen, as from a *scena dubia*, where the keenest or most fastidious appetite may find gratification in a profusion of various and exquisite viands, which not only please the taste but invigorate the constitution. We leave him, as we have often left him before, with renewed and increased conviction, that amidst all his blunders and refinements, all his frivolous cavils and hardy conjectures, all his sacrifices of taste to acuteness, and all his rovings from poetry to prose, still he is the first critic whom a true scholar would wish to consult in adjusting the text of Horace. Yes, the memory of Bentley has ultimately triumphed over the attacks of his enemies, and his mistakes are found to be light, in the balance, when weighed against his numerous, his splendid, and matchless discoveries. He has not much to fear even from such rivals in literary fame

as Cunningham, Baxter, and Dawes. He deserved to obtain, and he has obtained, the honourable suffrages of kindred spirits, a Lennep, a Ruhnken, a Hemsterhuis, and a Porson. In fine, he was one of those rare and exalted personages who, whether right or wrong in detached instances, always excite attention and reward it—always inform where they do not convince—always send away their readers with enlarged knowledge—with animated curiosity and with wholesome exercise to those general habits of thinking which enable them upon maturer reflection, and after more extensive inquiry, to discern and avoid the errors of their illustrious guides.—*Dr. Parr.*

The greatest critic and most amiable grammarian of the last age.—*Dr. Lowth.*

## Daniel Defoe.

1663–1731.

Nobody ever laid down the book of “Robinson Crusoe” without wishing it longer.—*Folinson.*

There exists no work more generally read or more universally admired than “Robinson Crusoe.” It is difficult to say in what the charm consists by which persons of all classes and denominations are thus fascinated; yet the majority of readers will recollect it as amongst the first works which awakened and interested their youthful attention; and feel even in advanced life, and in the maturity of their understanding, that there are still associated with “Robinson Crusoe” the sentiments peculiar to that period, when all is new, all glittering in prospect, and when those visions are most bright which the experience of after life tends only to darken and destroy.—*Sir W. Scott.*

He is a middle-sized, spare man, about forty years old, of a dark complexion and dark-brown coloured hair, but wears a wig, a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth; was born in London, and for many years was a hose-factor in Freeman’s-yard, in Cornhill, and is now owner of the brick and pantile works near Tilbury Fort in Essex.—*Advertisement accompanying a reward of 50*l.* for his apprehension, 1703.*

“Robinson Crusoe’s” manuscript ran through the whole trade, nor would any one print it, though the writer, De Foe, was in good repute as an author. One bookseller at last, not



remarkable for his discernment, but very much so for his speculative turn, engaged in this publication. *This* bookseller got above a thousand guineas by it; and the booksellers are accumulating money every hour by editions of this work in all shapes.—*I. D'Israeli.*

He was a powerful though unpolished satirist in verse; was master of an admirable prose style; in his "Review" . . . led the way to that class of essay writing, and those dramatic sketches of common life and manners, which were afterwards so happily perfected by Steele and Addison; in his "Essay on Trade" anticipated many of those broad and liberal principles which are regarded as modern discoveries; in his moral essays and some of his novels undoubtedly set the example of that minute description and perplexing casuistry of which Richardson so successfully availed himself; was among the first to advocate the intellectual equality and the necessity of improvements in the education of women; suggested the projects of *Savings Banks* and an *Asylum for Idiots*; among other notable services and claims to attention, by his thoughts on the best mode of lighting and watching the streets of the metropolis, might be considered as the author of the modern system of police; and even in party matters, and the heats and rancorous differences of jarring sects, generally seized on that point of view which displayed most moderation and good sense, and in his favourite conclusions and arguments was half a century before his contemporaries, who for that reason made common cause against him.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1830.

See where on high stands unabash'd Defoe!—*Pope.*

One of those authors (the fellow who was pilloried, I have forgot his name) is indeed so grave, sententious, dogmatical a rogue, that there is no enduring him.—*Swift.*

The charm of De Foe's works, especially "*Robinson Crusoe*," is founded on the same principle. It always interests, never agitates. *Crusoe* himself is merely a representative of humanity in general; neither his intellectual nor his moral qualities set him above the middle degree of mankind; his only prominent characteristic is the spirit of enterprise and wandering, which is, nevertheless, a very common disposition. You will observe that all that is wonderful in this tale is the result of external circumstances—of things which fortune brings to *Crusoe's* hands . . . One excellence of De Foe, amongst many, is his sacrifice of lesser interest to the greater, because more uni-

versal.\* Had he (as without any improbability he might have done) given his "Robinson Crusoe" any of the turn for natural history, which forms so striking and delightful a feature in the equally uneducated Dampier;—had he made him find out qualities and uses in the before (to him) unknown plants of the island—discover, for instance, a substitute for hops, or describe birds, &c.—many delightful pages and incidents might have enriched the book; but then Crusoe would have ceased to be the universal representative—the person for whom every reader could substitute himself. But now nothing is done, thought, suffered, or desired, but what every man can imagine himself doing, thinking, feeling, or wishing for. Even so very easy a problem as that of finding a substitute for ink is with exquisite judgment made to baffle Crusoe's inventive faculties. And in what he does, he arrives at no excellence; he does not make basket-work like Will Atkins; the carpentering, tailoring, pottery, &c., are all just what will answer his purposes, and those are confined to needs that all men have, and comforts that all men desire. Crusoe rises only to the point to which all men may be made to feel that they might, and that they ought to, rise in religion—to resignation, dependence on, and thankful acknowledgment of, the Divine mercy and goodness.—*Cornhill Magazine.*

### Matthew Prior.

1664–1721.

Beloved by every muse.—*Gay.*

On the queen's accession to the throne, he was continued in his office: is very well at court with the ministry, and is an entire creature of my Lord Jersey's, whom he supports by his advice; is one of the best poets in England, but very factious in conversation. A thin, hollow-looking man, turned of 40 years old. *This is near the truth.*—*Swift's Works.*

Now in equipages stately, now humbly on foot,  
Both fortunes he tried, but to neither would trust;  
And whirled in the round as the wheel turned about,  
He found riches had wings, and knew man was but dust.

*Prior.*

His philosophy, his good sense, his happy easy turns and melody, his loves and his epicureanism, bear a great resem-

blance to that most delightful and accomplished 'master (Horace).—*Thackeray*.

I mentioned Lord Hales' censure of Prior in his preface to a collection of sacred poems, by various hands, published by him at Edinburgh a great many years ago, where he mentions "These impure tales which will be the eternal opprobrium of their ingenious author." Johnson: "Sir, Lord Hales has forgot. There is nothing in Prior that will excite to lewdness. If Lord Hales thinks there is, he must be more combustible than other people." I instanced the tale of "Paulo Purganti and his Wife." Johnson: "Sir, there is nothing there but that his wife wanted to be kissed, when poor Paulo was out of pocket. No, sir, Prior is a lady's book. No lady is ashamed to have it standing in her library."—*Boswell*.

I have been assured that Prior, after having spent the evening with Oxford, Bolingbroke, Pope, and Swift, would go and smoke a pipe and drink a bottle of ale with a common soldier and his wife in Long Acre, before he went to bed.—"*Richardsoniana*."

Prior was not unfamiliar with ancient mythology; but in his case familiarity may be said to have bred contempt; and though many classical touches are to be found in his verses, yet, in his jocular vein, he too frequently degrades his Venuses and Cupids, not less than his Chloes and Silvias.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1850.

It is remarkable that this poet, though he wrote verse with singular ease and grace, lost this faculty in prose, especially in his familiar letters. The reason might be that he wrote verses to please himself, and therefore followed the natural vein; but in writing letters his aim was to please others, and he thought he could not do this but by writing in his character of a wit, which would of course render his manner constrained, pert, and affected. The observation applies in some degree to Pope himself, at least in his early letters to wits and ladies.—*Dr. Hurd*.

Matthew Prior, soon after his return from the Court of

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<sup>1</sup> "Tradition," says Dr. Johnson, "represents him as willing to descend from the dignity of the poet and the statesman to the low delights of mean company. His Chloe was probably sometimes ideal; but the woman with whom he cohabited was a despicable drab of the lowest species. One of his wenches, perhaps Chloe, while he was absent from his house, stole his plate and ran away; as was related by a woman who had been his servant."—"*Life of Prior*."

France, where he had been Plenipotentiary, went to Cambridge, and paid a visit to the master of St. John's, of which he was a Fellow. The master loved Prior's principles; had a great opinion of his abilities, and a respect for his character in the world; but he had much greater respect for himself; and he knew his own dignity too well to suffer a Fellow of his college to sit down in his presence. He kept his seat, and left the queen's ambassador to stand. Piqued at this, Prior wrote the following extempore epigram on the reception he had met with, and addressed it to the Master:—

I stood, sir, patient at your feet,  
 Before your elbow chair;  
 But make a bishop's throne your seat,  
 I'd kneel before you there.  
 One only thing can keep you down,  
 For your great soul too mean;  
 You'd not, to mount a bishop's throne,  
 Pay homage to the queen.—“*Life of Prior.*”

### Sir John Vanbrugh.

1666–1726.

Van wants grace who never wanted wit.—*Pope.*

He emptied quarries rather than built houses.—*Horace Walpole.*

There is something so catching to the ear, so easy to the memory in all he wrote, that it has been observed by all the actors of my time, that the style of no author whatsoever gave their memory less trouble than that of Sir John Vanbrugh; which I myself, who have been charged with several of his strongest characters, can confirm by a pleasing experience.—*Colley Cibber.*

He had great originality of invention; he understood light and shadow; and had great skill in composition.—*Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

Alluding to Blenheim, Swift observes—

That if his Grace were no more skilled in  
 The art of battering walls than building,  
 We might expect to see next year  
 A mouse-trap man chief engineer.

Such was the opinion entertained by a contemporary wit of Vanbrugh's architecture. His comedies, renowned for the well-sustained ease and spirit of the dialogue, are to those who deem the gratification of curiosity cheaply bought by an acquaintance with all that is accounted most licentious, curious as pictures of the manners of the times in which they were written.—“*Memoirs of Duchess of Marlborough.*”

I'm in with Captain Vanbrugh at the present,  
A most sweet-manner'd gentleman, and pleasant ;  
He writes your comedies, draws schemes and models,  
And builds dukes' houses upon very odd hills.  
For him so much I dote on him, that I  
If I was sure to go to heaven, would die.—*N. Rowe.*

## Jonathan Swift.

1667–1745.

All my endeavours to distinguish myself were only for want of a great title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts.—*Swift.*

The most unhappy man on earth.—*Dr. King.*

Young man, you will never be a poet.—*Dryden.*

I remember, as I and others were taking with Swift an evening walk, about a mile out of Dublin, he stopped short ; we passed on ; but perceiving he did not follow us, I went back and found him fixed as a statue, and earnestly gazing upwards at a noble tree which, in its upper branches, was much withered and decayed. Pointing at it, he said, “I shall be like that tree ; I shall die atop.”—*Dr. Young.*

His praise assumed the appearance and language of complaint ; his benefits were often prefaced by a prologue of a threatening nature ; his most grave themes were blended with ironical pleasantry ; and, in those of a lighter nature, deep and bitter satire is often concealed under the most trifling levity.—*Sir W. Scott.*

Swift is clear, but shallow. In coarse humour he is inferior to Arbuthnot ; in delicate humour he is inferior to Addison. So he is inferior to his contemporaries, without putting him against the whole world.—*Fohnson.*

The character of his life will appear like that of his writings ;

they will both bear to be reconsidered and re-examined with the utmost attention, and always discover new beauties and excellence upon every examination.—*Delany*.

What pleas'd before in Swift we now detest ;  
Proscrib'd not only in the world polite,  
But ev'n too nasty for a city knight.—*Byron*.

No one could be an ill-tempered man who wrote so much nonsense as Swift did.—*C. F. Fox*.

He moves laughter, but never joins in it. He appears in his works such as he appears in society. All the company are convulsed with merriment, while the Dean, the author of all the mirth, preserves an invincible gravity and even sourness of aspect, and gives utterance to the most eccentric and ludicrous fancies with the air of a man reading the Communion Service.—*Macaulay*.

An immense genius ; an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling.—*Thackeray*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Has not Mr. Thackeray (with the highest respect and reverence for that great man be it spoken) mistaken or exaggerated certain prominent points in Swift's character? Swift's "Modest Proposal," for instance, is interpreted by him into damnatory evidence of Swift's infamous character. "Could Dick Steele, or Goldsmith, or Fielding," he inquires, "in his most reckless moment of satire, have written anything like the Dean's famous 'Modest Proposal' for eating children? Not one of these but melts at the thoughts of childhood, fondles and caresses it." But we are not surely to accept this "Modest Proposal" but as an exquisitely grave piece of irony, which no more convicts the Dean of a bad heart, than Thackeray's devilish bad women and imbecile good women convict him as a woman-hater. Swift might have loved children, and yet made the proposal. It was the wisest man of his age who wrote an elaborate treatise in praise of folly. Could Steele or Goldsmith or Fielding have written "The Proposal?" This is surely idle. Could Steele have written "Jonathan Wild?" Could Goldsmith have written the character of Atossa or Sporus? Could Fielding have written the reasons for not abolishing Christianity? Could Swift have written "Tom Jones?" Another instance: It was Swift's custom to read prayers in the utmost secrecy to his household. "There was no need," says Thackeray, "surely, why a Church dignitary should assemble his private family in a crypt, as if he was afraid of heathen persecution." But whoever rightly understands the Dean's character will understand the need. Johnson, Swift's bitterest enemy, allows that the Dean represented himself as infinitely worse than he was, from dread of being thought a hypocrite. His secrecy in reading prayers was to prevent his guests from witnessing his piety; they would charge him with hypocrisy, he thought; for how were they to reconcile his writings with his devoutness

He assumed more the air of a patron than a friend; he dictated rather than advised. With all this there was the greatest possible value set by Swift upon his own person. He was elated with the appearance of enjoying ministerial confidence. He enjoyed the shadow whilst the substance was withheld from him. He was employed, not trusted, and at the same time he imagined himself a subtle diver, who dexterously shot down into the profoundest region of politics. He was suffered only to sound the shallows near the shore, and was scarce permitted to descend below the froth at the top. Perhaps the deeper bottom was too muddy for his inspection.—*Lord Orrery.*

Whoever reads Swift a second time laughs more heartily at him than on the first perusal. At least I do. He represents the mass of mankind just what it is in respect to its rationality. How superstitious and grovelling is its spirit! It was an admirable hit at the prevalent superstition of burying the dead east and west, to propose burying them with their heads downwards.—*T. Campbell.*

Let Ireland tell how wit upheld her cause,  
Her trade supported and supplied her laws;  
And leave on Swift this grateful verse engrav'd,  
"The rights a court attack'd, a poet sav'd."  
Behold the hand that wrought a nation's cure,  
Stretch'd to relieve the idiot and the poor;  
Proud vice to brand, or injur'd worth adorn,  
And stretch the rays to ages yet unborn.—*Pope.*

*Anima Rabelasii habitans in sicco.*—*Coleridge.*

The most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age.—*Addison.*

The termination of Swift's career—the retributive justice, which, if we believed in spirits, poor Stella's ghost might have witnessed—the joyless close of an existence which no affectionate cares sought to cheer; the consignment of the wretched and violent lunatic to servants and keepers; the moody silence of the once eloquent and witty ornament of courtly saloons; the

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without concluding him to be a hypocrite? All Swift's biographers approvingly record this secrecy in devotion. They knew his hatred of hypocrisy, they recognised his method of obviating the charge he dreaded, and commended the piety so scrupulously concealed and so unremittently practised.—*Ed.*

deep despair to which medicine could not minister, but which a moral influence might have alleviated, but which no son nor daughter's tender perseverance, with untaught, but often perhaps effectual skill, sought to solace: these, with all other gloomy particulars of Swift's awful aberrations and death, on which not one light of consciousness was shown, must be by all remembered.—“*Life of the Duchess of Marlborough.*”

Several in their books have many sarcastical and spiteful strokes at religion in general; while others make themselves pleasant with the principles of the Christian. Of the last kind this age has seen a most audacious example in the work entitled “*A Tale of a Tub.*” Had this writing been published in a pagan or popish nation, who are justly impatient of all indignity offered to the established religion of their country, no doubt but the author would have received the punishment he deserved. But the fate of this impious buffoon is very different; for in a Protestant kingdom, zealous of their civil and religious immunities, he has not only escaped affronts and the effects of public resentment, but has been caressed and patronized by persons of great figure and of all denominations.—*Sir Richard Blackmore.*<sup>1</sup>

When Swift is considered as an author, it is just to estimate his powers by their effects. In the reign of Queen Anne he turned the stream of popularity against the Whigs, and must be confessed to have dictated for a time the political opinions of the English nation. In the succeeding reign he delivered Ireland from plunder and oppression; and showed that wit, confederated with truth, had such force as authority was unable to resist. He said truly of himself that Ireland was his debtor. It was from the time when he first began to patronize the Irish that they may date their riches and prosperity. He taught them first to know their own interest, their weight, and their strength, and gave them spirit to assert that equality with their fellow-subjects to which they have ever since been making vigorous advances, and to claim those rights which they have at last established. Nor can they be charged with ingratitude

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<sup>1</sup> It is said that Dr. Sacheverel meeting Smallridge attempted to flatter him by seeming to think him the author of the “*Tale of a Tub.*” But Smallridge replied with indignation, “Not that all you and I have in the world, nor all that we ever shall have, should hire me to write the ‘*Tale of a Tub.*’”—ED.



to their benefactor ; for they revered him as a guardian, and obeyed him as a dictator.—*Dr. Johnson.*

## William Whiston.

1667-1752.

Who travels in religious jars  
 (Truth mix'd with error, shades with rays),  
 Like Whiston, wanting pyx or stars,  
 In ocean wide or sinks or strays.—*Bentley.*

— That good, but weak man, old Mr. Whiston, whom I have seen distributing in the streets, money to beggars on each hand of him, till his pocket was nearly exhausted.—*Hawkins.*

Mr. Whiston was one of the first divines who revived this controversy (*i.e.*, the doctrine of the Trinity) in the eighteenth century. About the year 1706, he began to entertain some doubts about the proper eternity and omniscience of Christ. This led him to review the popular doctrine of the Trinity, and in order to execute this review with a degree of diligence and circumspection suitable to its importance, he read the New Testament twice over, and also all the ancient genuine monuments of the Christian religion, till near the conclusion of the second century. By this inquiry he was led to think that at the incarnation of Christ the *Logos* or eternal wisdom supplied the place of the rational soul or *πνευμα*—that the eternity of the Son of God was not a real distinct existence as of a Son properly co-eternal with His Father by a true eternal generation, but rather a metaphysical existence in *potentia*, or in some sublimer manner in the Father, as His wisdom or word ; that Christ's real creation or generation (for both these terms are used by the earlier writers) took place some time before the creation of the world ;—that the Council of Nice itself established no other eternity of Christ ;—and finally, that the Arian doctrine on these points was the original doctrine of Christ himself, of His holy Apostles, and of the primitive Christians.—*Dr. Maclaine.*

A name become almost proverbial for downright honesty and sincerity, deaf to all the cautions of worldly prudence,—for a childlike simplicity in the ways of men, combined with a clear intuition into the depths of abstract science.—*Lucy Aikin.*

- Who proved, as sure as God's in Gloster,  
That Moses was a grand impostor.—*Swift*.

Poor Whiston believed in everything but the Trinity.—*Macaulay*.

“Wicked Will Whiston.” This epithet, bestowed playfully upon Whiston by Swift, in ridicule of his sanctimony, would almost seem to have been seriously justified by his general bad faith in scattering injurious anecdotes about everybody who refused to fall in with his follies. His excuse lies in the extreme weakness of his brain. Think of a man, who had brilliant preferment within his reach, dragging his poor wife and daughter for half a century through the very mire of despondency and destitution, because he disapproved of Athanasius, or because the “Shepherd of Hermas” was not sufficiently esteemed by the Church of England! Unhappy is that family over which a fool presides. The secret of all Whiston’s lunacies may be found in that sentence of his Autobiography, where he betrays the fact of his liability, from youth upwards, to flatulency. What he mistook for conscience was flatulence, which others (it is well known) have mistaken for inspiration. This was his original misfortune; his second was, that he lived before the age of powerful drastic journals. Had he been contemporary with Christopher North, the knout would have brought him to his senses, and extorted the gratitude of Mrs. Whiston and her children.—*Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1833:

Had Mr. Whiston’s researches been confined within the bounds of Ramus or Crackanthorp, that learned news-monger might have acquiesc’d in what the holy oracles pronounce upon the Deluge, like other Christians.—*John Henley*.

He was a pious and learned man, who, although he was denied the Sacrament, did not suffer himself to be driven out of the Church of England till 1747. At last he established a small congregation in his own house, in accordance with his own notion of primitive Christianity.—*Henry Morley*.

## William Congreve.

1670–1729.

Mirabel, the fine gentleman of the play (“Way of the World”) is, I believe, not very distant from the real character of Congreve.—*Tom Davies*.

A touch of Steele's tenderness is worth all his finery; a flash of Swift's lightning,—a beam of Addison's pure sunshine, and his tawdry play-house taper is invisible. But the ladies loved him, and he was undoubtedly a pretty fellow.—*Thackeray*.

His scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion; his personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike. His comedies have therefore in some degree the operation of tragedies; they surprise rather than divert, and raise admiration rather than merriment. But they are the works of a mind replete with images and quick in combinations.—*FJohnson*.

The wit of Congreve far outshines that of every comic writer, except Sheridan, who has arisen within the last two centuries.—*Macaulay*.

What plays! what wit! *Hélas!* Congreve and Vanbrugh are your only comedy. Our society is too insipid now for the like copy.—*Byron*.

The great art of Congreve is shown in this, that he has entirely excluded from his scenes—some little generousities on the part of Angelica perhaps excepted—not only anything like a faultless character, but any pretensions to goodness or good feelings whatever. Whether he did this designedly or instinctively, the effect is as happy as the design (if design) was bold. I used to wonder at the strange power which his "Way of the World" in particular possesses of interesting you all along in the pursuits of characters for whom you absolutely care nothing—for you neither hate nor love his personages—and I think it is owing to this very indifference to any that you endure the whole. He has spread a privation of moral light, I will call it, rather than by the ugly name of palpable darkness, over his creations, and his shadows flit before you without distinction or preference. Had he introduced a good character, a single gush of moral feeling, a revulsion of the judgment to actual life and actual duties, the impertinent Goshen would have only lighted to the discovery of deformities, which now are none, because we think them none.—*Lamb*.

I never knew anybody that had so much wit as Congreve.—*Lady M. W. Montagu*.

But since, like you,<sup>c</sup> no youth could please,  
Nor at his first attempt boast such success;  
Where all mankind have fail'd, you glories won;

Triumphant are in this alone,  
 In this, have all the bards of old outdone.—*Yalden*.<sup>1</sup>  
 In him all beauties of this age we see,  
 Etheredge's courtship, Southerne's purity,  
 The satire, wit, and strength of manly Wycherley.  
*Dryden.*

Congreve ! whose fancy's unexhausted store  
 Has given already much, and promised more,  
 Congreve shall still preserve thy name alive,  
 And Dryden's muse shall in his friend survive.  
*Addison.*

As tuneful Congreve tries his rural strains,  
 Pan quits the woods, the list'ning Fauns the plains,  
 And Philomel in notes like his complains.—*Garth.*

Friendly Congreve, unapproachable man.—*Gay.*

From a rapid survey of his life and character he seems to have been one of those indifferent children of the earth whom the world cannot hate ; who are neither too good nor too bad for the present state of existence, and who may fairly expect their portion here. The darkest—at least the most enduring stain on his memory is the immorality of his writings ; but this was the vice of the time, and his comedies are considerably more decorous than those of his predecessors. They are too cold to be mischievous ; they keep the brain in too incessant action to allow the passions to kindle. For those who search into the powers of intellect, the combinations of thought which may be produced by volition, the plays of Congreve may form a profitable study. But their time is fled—on the stage they will be received no more ; and of the devotees of light reading, such as could read them without dis-

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<sup>1</sup> Yalden (born 1671) is one of some dozen versifiers whose names, but not their verses, have been perpetuated by their admission into Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." He was the friend of Sacheverel and Addison, and succeeded Atterbury as preacher at Bridewell Hospital (1713). In spite of the wretchedness of his poetry he was charged with plagiarism from Congreve. He died July 16, 1736. Johnson has epitomized his merits and defects in his usual periods : "Of his other poems it is sufficient to say that they deserve perusal, though they are not exactly polished, though the rhymes are sometimes very ill-sorted, and though his faults seem rather the omission of idleness than the negligence of enthusiasm."—*Ed.*

gust, would probably peruse them with little pleasure.—*Hartley Coleridge.*

He quitted the stage early, and Comedy left it with him.—*John Dennis.*

Wickedness is no subject for comedy; to forget this was Congreve's great error, and almost peculiar to him.—*S. T. Coleridge.*

Instead of endeavouring to raise a vain monument to myself, let me leave behind me a memorial of my friendship with one of the most valuable men as well as finest writers of my age and country—one who has tried, and knows by his own experience, how hard an undertaking it is to do justice to Homer—and one who, I am sure, seriously rejoices with me at the period of my labours. To him, therefore, having brought this long work to a conclusion, I desire to dedicate it, and to have the honour and satisfaction of placing together in this manner the names of Mr. Congreve and of—A. Pope.—*Post-script to Translation of the "Iliad" of Homer, 1720.*

### Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury.

1671–1713.

His health was delicate; his taste was refined even to fastidiousness; he soon left politics to men whose bodies and minds were of coarser texture than his own; gave himself up to more intellectual luxury; lost himself in the mazes of the old academic philosophy, and aspired to the glory of reviving the old academic eloquence. His diction, affected and florid, but often singularly beautiful and melodious, fascinated many young enthusiasts. He had not merely disciples, but worshippers. His life was short; but he lived long enough to become the founder of a new set of free-thinkers, diametrically opposed in opinions and feelings to that sect of free-thinkers of which Hobbes was the oracle. During many years "The Characteristics" continued to be the Gospel of romantic and sentimental unbelievers, while the Gospel of cold-blooded and hard-headed unbelievers was the "Leviathan."—*Macaulay.*

Anthony Ashley Cooper was a very distinguished writer, born in 1671. His parliamentary conduct was marked by an honourable and earnest support of every measure tending to increase the prosperity and maintain the freedom of his fellow subjects. He was the author of various works, the principal of

which is entitled "Characteristics of Men and Manners, Opinions and Times;" but though lively and elegant, they are all tinged with indecorous levity.—*Universal Biography.*

If Shaftesbury had lived to see the candour and moderation of present times in discovering religious subjects, he would have been a good Christian.—*Bishop Butler.*

Lord Shaftesbury, like all other eminent innovators, has been misrepresented both by his friends and his enemies. Dr. Leland has steered a middle course, between the blind enthusiasm of the former and the partial malignancy of the latter. He points out with singular penetration and judgment the errors, inconsistencies, and contradictions of that illustrious author; does justice to what is good in his writings; separates carefully the wheat from the chaff; and neither condemns nor approves in the lump, as so many have done.—*Dr. MacLaine.*

He rose once in the House of Commons, but found himself so embarrassed that he was unable to speak. The motion was for granting counsel to prisoners in cases of high treason. The house cheered him; when he said, "If I, sir, who rise only to offer my opinion on this bill, am so confounded that I am unable to express myself, what must be the condition of that man who, without any assistance, is pleading for his life?"—*Vaughan.*

You say you cannot understand how Lord Shaftesbury came to be a philosopher in vogue: I will tell you; first, he was a lord; secondly, he was as vain as any of his readers; thirdly, men are very prone to believe what they do not understand; fourthly, they will believe anything at all, provided they are under no obligation to believe it; fifthly, they love to take a new road, even when that road leads nowhere; sixthly, he was reckoned a fine writer, and seems always to mean more than he said. Would you have any more reasons? An interval of above forty years has pretty well destroyed the charm. A dead lord ranks with commoners; vanity is no longer interested in the matter; for a new road has become an old one.—*Gray.*

### Sir Richard Steele.

1671-1729

Sir Richard Steele was the best-natured creature in the world: even in his worst state of health he seemed to desire nothing but to please and be pleased.—*Dr. Young*

He is of a middle stature, broad shoulders, thick legs, a shape like the picture of somebody over a farmer's chimney—a short chin, a short nose, a short forehead, a broad, flat face, and a dusky countenance. Yet with such a shape and such a face, he discovered at sixty that he took himself for a beauty, and appeared to be more mortified at being told that he was ugly than he was by any reflection made upon his honour or understanding.—*John Dennis.*

The great charm of Steele's writing is its naturalness. He wrote so quickly and carelessly that he was forced to make the reader his confidant, and had not the time to deceive him. He had a small share of book-learning, but a vast acquaintance with the world.—*Thackeray.*

His sympathies were with all England. Defoe and he, with eyes upon the future, were the truest leaders of their time. It was the firm hand of his friend Steele that helped Addison up to the place in literature that became him.—*Morley.*

His temper was sweet, his affections warm, his spirits lively, his passions strong, and his principles weak. His life was spent in sinning and repenting; in inculcating what was right, and in doing what was wrong. In speculation he was a man of piety and honour; in practice he was much of the rake, and a little of the swindler.—*Macaulay.*

Sir Richard Steele was a very good-natured man, and Dr. Garth a very worthy one.—*Lady M. W. Montagu.*

Steele, with considerable humour, had still more power in the pathetic; not indeed that of the buskin, but of every-day life; hence his short narratives of domestic circumstances, often conveyed in imaginary letters, which have much of this quality, were doubtless amongst the most attractive portions of the "Tatler" on its first appearance. In fact, notwithstanding a considerable alloy of what must now be reckoned for dross and refuse—coarseness of idea and bluntness of expression—they still interest; and in good part by virtue of the liberal, the humane, and the generous sentiment which they seldom fail to inculcate, and which evidently came from the heart.—*Lucy Aikin.*

His natural disposition was amiable, but so incautious that his famous parallel between Addison and himself must be equally admired for its candour and its truth. "The one," says Steele, speaking of his friend "with patience, foresight, and temperate address, always waited and stemmed the

torrent; while the other often plunged himself into it, and was often taken out by the temper of him who stood weeping on the bank for his safety, whom he could not dissuade from leaping into it." This beautiful description of true friendship is indeed characteristic of him who found it inconvenient to have written the "Christian Hero" from the comparisons between his practice and his precepts which were incessantly drawn by his associates. Steele had all the brilliancy, and many of the failings of his brilliant countrymen.<sup>1</sup> That his mind was never debased by the irregular pursuits and dissolute society to which he gave his time, is apparent from the beautiful sentiments which pervade that exquisite comedy, the "Conscious Lovers," one of the most elegant delineations of that species of love which borders on romance in the range of our dramatic literature.—"*Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.*"

We knew the obligations the stage had to his writings; there being scarcely a comedian of merit in our whole company whom his "Tatlers" had not made better by his recommendation of them.—*Colley Cibber.*

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<sup>1</sup> Steele was a man of great benevolence, which unfortunately was rendered unserviceable to his friends by his bad memory. Under his own reputation of kind-heartedness he made his friends minister to his wants; they talked loudly of his benevolence; but when they came to inquire of each other they found that each man was a creditor; that no one had received anything from Steele, while Steele had been borrowing from all. I am very much afraid that Steele was a quack. He humbugged his two wives, and he humbugged his hundred creditors. I am not quite sure that he did not humbug Addison. He could hardly help respecting his talents; but honest admiration or generous affection does not as a rule induce so much obsequiousness as we find in Steele's conduct to Addison; at least it could be wished that the services rendered by Addison to Sir Richard had been less important, and that Sir Richard had not found Addison quite so necessary to him. Steele was a man of good resolutions and of bad practices. He would write a treatise against drinking, and leave his task unfinished whilst he got drunk with his friend at an alehouse, or be found asleep in his arm-chair with two empty bottles beside him. He would write a pamphlet on the efficacy of faith, the value of religious observances, and would abandon piety and church-going, until the restraint of the bailiffs or the emptiness of his purse gave him leisure to meditate fresh schemes of virtue. He was a man who was liberal only in the security of having nothing to give.—ED.



## Colley Cibber.

1671-1757.

Cibber, with a great stock of levity, vanity, and affectation, had sense, and wit, and humour.—*Warton.*

His treatise on the stage is inimitable; where an author writes on his own profession, feels it profoundly, and is sensible his readers do not, he is not only excusable, but meritorious, for illuminating the subject by new metaphors or bolder figures than ordinary.—*Walpole.*

Colley Cibber, sir, was by no means a blockhead; but by arrogating to himself too much he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled. His friends gave out that he *intended* his birthday odes should be bad; but that was not the case, sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he showed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit. I remember the following couplet in allusion to the king and himself:—

Perch'd on the eagle's soaring wing,  
The lonely 'linnet loves to sing.<sup>1</sup>

Sir, he had heard something of the fabulous tale of the wren sitting upon the eagle's wing, and he had applied it to a linnet. Cibber's familiar style, however, was better than that which Whitehead assumed. *Grand* nonsense is insupportable.—*Johnson.*

Colley, we are told, had the honour to be a member of the great club at White's; and so, I suppose, might any other man who wore good clothes and paid his money when he lost it. But on what terms did Cibber live with this society? Why, he feasted most sumptuously, as I have heard his friend Victor say, with an air of triumphant exultation, with Mr. Arthur and his wife, and gave a trifle for his dinner. After he had dined, when the club-room door was opened, and the Laureate was

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<sup>1</sup> Cibber introduces the image of a wren in an epilogue after his version of King John:—

He's but the wren that mounts on Shakspeare's wings,  
Where, while the eagle soars, he safely sings.—Ed.

introduced, he was saluted with a loud and joyous acclamation of "O King Coll ! Come in, King Coll !" and "Welcome, welcome, King Colley !" and this kind of gratulation, Mr. Victor thought, was very gracious and very honourable.—*Davies, "Life of Garrick."*

He flourished in wig and embroidery, player, poet, and manager, during the Augustan age of Queen Anne, somewhat earlier and somewhat later. A most egregious fop, according to all accounts he was, but a very pleasant one notwithstanding, as your fop of parts is apt to be. Pope gained but little in the war he waged with him, for this plain reason, that the great poet accuses his adversary of dullness, which was not by any means one of his sins, instead of selecting one of the numerous faults, such as pertness, petulance, and presumption of which he was really guilty.—*M. R. Mitford.*

## Ambrose Phillips.

1671-1749.

A serious and dreary idyllic cockney.—*Thackeray.*

A good Whig and a middling poet, who had the honour of bringing into fashion a species of composition which has been called<sup>1</sup> after his name, "Namby Pamby."—*Macaulay*

Of his personal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and skill in the sword, and that in conversation he was solemn and pompous. He had great sensibility of censure, if judgment may be made by a single story which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordshire. "Phillips" said he, "was once at a table when I asked him, How came thy King of Epirus to drive oxen, and to say, 'I'm goaded on by love?' After which question he never spoke again."—*Johnson.*

When Phillips came forth as starch as a Quaker,  
Whose simple profession's a pastoral maker,  
Apollo advised him from playhouse to keep,  
And pipe to naught else but his dog and his sheep.

*Duke of Buckingham.*

Phillips was a neat dresser, and very vain. In a conversation between him, Congreve, Swift, and others, the discourse

<sup>1</sup> By Pope. See Johnson's "Life of Phillips."—*Ed.*

turned on Julius Cæsar. Ambrose asked him, what sort of a person Julius Cæsar had? He was assured that from medals, &c., it appeared that he was a small man, and thin-faced. "Now, for my part," said Phillips, "I should take him to have been of a lean make, pale complexion, extremely neat in his dress, and five feet seven inches high." This happened to be an exact description of Phillips himself. Swift, who understood good breeding perfectly well, and would not interrupt anyone while speaking, let him go on; and when he had done said, "And I, Mr. Phillips, should take Cæsar to have been a plump man, just five feet five inches high; not very neatly dressed, in a black gown with pudding sleeves."—"*Percy Anecdotes.*"

### Dr. Sacheverel.

1672-1724.

States to embroil and faction to display,  
In wild harangues, Sacheverel led the way.

*R. Dodsley.*

A divine of very little moral character and no great abilities. . . . who, a renegade from Whiggism which had not been profitable to him, was now a violent Tory, with a better prospect of gain.—*Wright.*

The Sentinel

Who loudest rang his 'larum pulpit-bell.—*Wordsworth.*

We meet with a low, grovelling nonsense in every Grub-street production; but I think there are none of our present writers who have hit the sublime in nonsense besides Dr. Sacheverel in divinity.—*Addison.*

The trumpeter of sedition—*Cunningham.*

It is difficult to say which is most worthy of ridicule—the ministry, in arming all the powers of government in their attack upon an obscure individual, or the public in supporting a culprit whose doctrine was more odious than his insolence, and his principles yet more contemptible than his parts.—*Mrs. Macaulay.*

This brawling priest attacked Godolphin in the pulpit by the name of *Volpone*; inveighed against Burnet and other Bishops for not unfurling the bloody flag against Dissent; abused the Revolution as unrighteous; and broadly re-asserted

non-resistance and passive obedience. The man was such a fool and madman that a serious thought should not have been wasted on him, whatever might be needful to discountenance his atrocious doctrines.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1845.

## Joseph Addison.<sup>1</sup>

1672–1719.

A parson in a tie-wig.—*Dr. Mandeville*.

The style of Addison is adorned by the female graces of elegance and mildness.—*Gibbon*.

Mr. Addison to be sure was a great man ; his learning was

<sup>1</sup> If we are to judge of Addison by what he has written we must pronounce him one of the most virtuous men that ever lived. He made all that he wrote luminous with piety and fragrant with virtue. Writing in a day when blasphemy was accounted a high kind of wit, and obscenity a high kind of humour, he has transmitted almost nothing to which the most rigid female purist of our own most moral epoch could take the smallest exception. You will appreciate the amazing vigour of his mind which enabled him to leap so effectually and so far from the gutter in which the turgid and noisome dialect of that era flowed into the sewers, by comparing him with his contemporaries. Swift, who was exceptionally bad, may be omitted ; but compare him with Wycherley, Congreve, Gay, Garth, Prior, Dryden (who was still recent), and the noble rhymesters, such as Buckingham, Halifax, and Granville. When, however, we turn to his personal character the result of our inspection will not be found so satisfactory. He was possessed of qualities which in a smaller man must have been held up to ridicule and contempt. Those who call him proud forget that he was sometimes obsequious ; those who call him modest forget that he was an egotist ; those who call him noble as a man forget that he was treacherous as a friend and cowardly as an enemy. He was certainly selfish ; he was certainly mean. He was cautiously solicitous to serve his own ends, and cautiously solicitous to defeat the ends of others. As a writer he was the purest that ever took pen in hand ; as a man he was the most insidious that ever sapped the hopes of those whom he seemed to caress.

The famous character of *Atticus*, admired as perhaps the finest illustration of Pope's extraordinary genius, has been attributed to the misanthropy that in the "*Dunciad*" attacked the innocent, the helpless, and the guilty with indiscriminating acrimony. The testimony of Pope has been disputed. That Pope was venomous ; that he often attacked from sheer love of mischief and of giving pain ; that, embittered by his physical helplessness and harassed by his deformities, he recriminated the insults of brutal Dennis and his dull *confères*, by having a shot at every one who came within reach of his powder, cannot be denied. Yet Pope was capable of much honest feeling. His affection for Gay, his attachment to Arbuthnot, his admiration and friendship for Swift, were sincere ; and equally sincere was his respect for Addison. He was anxious for Addison's friendship ; and he

not profound ; but his morality, his humour, and his elegance of writing set him very high.—*Johnson.*

Give days and nights, Sir, to the study of Addison, if you mean either to be a good writer, or, what is more worth, an honest man.—*Ibid.*

He was above all men in that talent called humour, and

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proved his friendly feelings towards Addison by the only means perhaps that then lay in his power : he warmly praised him in rhyme. An opportunity, however, presented itself later, which enabled him, as he hoped, of imparting to Addison a higher idea of his friendly feelings than even his remarks in the "Essay on Medals" afforded. In the year 1699, Addison obtained, through the influence of a man whose attention he had very sedulously courted, a pension of three hundred pounds a year, which was conferred to enable him to prosecute his studies abroad. During his absence from England he wrote, in conjunction with other performances, four acts of his tragedy of "Cato." This incompleted tragedy on his return was shown to Pope, who warmly praised it. Addison was entreated to finish it ; but he resolutely declined to do so, alleging perhaps loss of interest in the fiction. The admiration and entreaties of his friends, with Pope at their head, so far prevailed that he called to his aid Hughes, one of the few slaves of his little court, an author whose "Siege of Damascus" maintained its popularity for many years, but whose turgid heroics are now unreadable, and desired him to write a fifth act for "Cato." Hughes complied, laboured with friendly zeal, and had nearly completed the task when to his mortification he learned that Addison had finished the work himself. With his usual care to procure the revival of competent critics, Addison submitted the play to Pope, who suggested several valuable alterations, and supplied a prologue. "Cato" was produced ; the house was packed with politicians, who applauded every line. "Cato" was printed, and John Dennis got hold of it. Dennis was a literary cannibal, of vigorous but coarse parts, whose greatest enjoyment was an author who, like Addison, had been rendered fat and juicy by the lavish pampering of the public. Sharpening his knife, Dennis fell with ridiculous relish to the chaste and classical repast of "Cato." Pope, mortified to see his friend ill-treated, published "A Narrative of the Madness of John Dennis," a lampoon of which the sole merit is that it furnishes a testimony to Pope's esteem of Addison. But Addison was envious of Pope ; the reputation of "The Crooked-backed Papist" was seriously distancing the reputation of the author of "The Campaign." Joseph's disingenuous efforts to obstruct Pope's fame had failed ; and with the natural resentment of a man who has tried to injure his friend, he coldly objected to Pope's interference, and, through his servant Steele, sent an apology to Dennis for a lampoon which, he said, he had no hand in. Now in what Pope had done there was certainly no hypocrisy. His zeal might be objectionable ; but his intentions could not be doubted. All that Pope had to gain by his admiration or his protection was Addison's friendship. This Addison refused, but not ostensibly. Still seeming to be on good terms with the little man, he sought to injure him in a dozen different ways. He incited Ambrose Phillips to charge him with disaffection to the government—a charge sufficiently serious

enjoyed it in such perfection that I have often reflected, after a night spent with him, that I had had the pleasure of conversing with an intimate of Terence and Catullus, who had all their wit and nature, heightened with humour more exquisite and delightful than any other man ever possessed.—*Sir R. Steele.*

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when the political attitude of the Roman Catholics in those times is recalled ; he cautioned Lady Mary Wortley Montagu against him as a man who would certainly play her ladyship some devilish trick if she was not careful ; he caused Tickell to print a translation of Homer (of which he was said to be the real author) at the moment when Pope's version was appearing, promising Tickell his influence to promote its circulation, above his rival's ; and he paid a hack ten guineas to publish some lying scandals against him. Pope might have refused at first to hear the rumours which his friends took care to whisper to him ; when the truth at last became clear he sent Mr. Addison a few lines of poetry, which, to use Pope's remark, made "Mr. Addison treat him very civilly ever after."

Of Addison's consistent insincerity towards his friends there can be no doubt. It seems certain that to Addison, Steele must always have appeared the best friend and warmest admirer any man ever had. How did Joseph treat Sir Richard ? Steele had one day incautiously borrowed a hundred pounds from Addison. The two men were on terms of the most intimate friendship ; they had been schoolboys together ; they were endeared by the pleasantest associations which this life has to offer for the support and confirmation of friendship in after years. Steele we may suppose borrowed the hundred pounds without reflecting that Addison would demand repayment, or should repayment be demanded, he was doubtless prepared to discharge his debt by the degrees his resources admitted. Addison, however, before long demanded the money ; Steele was not in a position to refund it. Without the smallest hesitation, Mr. Addison put an execution in Sir Richard's house, sold the furniture, and having pocketed his loan, to which he might have added the interest, handed the surplus to Steele. Those who dispute the sincerity of Steele's affection for Addison may bear this anecdote in mind. The admirers of Addison treat this harsh proceeding with good-natured levity. I will not stop to comment on it, but I may be permitted to express my doubts of a friendship that could preserve its integrity and its ardour after such a shock as this.

But of Addison's friends Mr. Pope and Sir Richard Steele were not the only victims of his friendship. Ambrose Phillips was a stately gentleman who had passed the best portion of his life in lisping dull songs about Chloris and Damon, Strephon and Delia, weak-minded shepherds and bread-and-butter shepherdesses, who made it their silly business to play dismal tunes on oaten reeds to listening flocks of sheep which they called their "fleece care." To see such a man made a fool of must delight every one. Pope made a fool of him by sending a paper to the "*Guardian*" brimful of good irony, in which while he appeared to praise Phillips as a superior poet to Pope, he left Pope so much the first that Phillips was literally nowhere. The artless and literal Irishman, Steele, was duped by the excellent irony ; the astute Addison saw the joke. Phillips was Addison's

In humour no mortal has excelled him except Molière.--  
*Warton.*

Addison was the best company in the world.—*Lady M. Montagu.*

I have never seen a more modest or a more awkward man.  
—*Chesterfield.*

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friend ; Addison indeed professed quite an affection for Phillips. He had praised his Pastorals ; he had praised his Tragedies. With great demureness, pretending not to see Pope's irony, he had it printed. The ridicule of his friends greatly exasperated Phillips, who hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to beat Pope when he should come to the coffee-house. Pope, who was no coward, laughed contemptuously at Phillips' menaces, called him a rascal, and charged him with robbing the Hanover Club. This double consequence—the discomfiture of Phillips and the quarrel of Pope—was much enjoyed by the virtuous Mr. Addison.

Of all the persons in that age who were least likely to provoke ill-feeling Gay was the chief. Everybody who knew Gay loved him. Yet one enemy Gay must have had, though he was doubtless quite unconscious of it. That enemy was not the malignant Pope, nor the surly Swift, nor the caustic Garth ; but the mild, the benevolent, the virtuous Mr. Addison, who from his deathbed sent for Mr. Gay, and told the good-natured fellow, with obvious remorse, that he had injured him ; but promised, should he recover, to make him liberal amends.

Among the several men who hung about Mr. Addison with the obsequiousness of servants and the flattery of knaves, I should doubt, however sincerely he might have been respected, whether there was one who loved him. He sat among them silent as a spectre, disdainful as a sultan. He boasted indeed of a good banking-account ; but he seldom produced his cheque-book. He was proud to a degree that almost justified the term of conceit. In the presence of those who knew him he let loose his imagination and conversed freely ; but a single stranger was sufficient to freeze him into rigidity. He resembled a woman who in her morning dress can converse familiarly enough with her family, but who when in evening dress dare not budge or even breathe easily for fear of bursting a lace or cracking a hook. His friends imputed his reserve to modesty ; but it was a modesty that strangely resembled self-conceit. He had a horror of impairing his dignity. His ambition was to be considered the greatest wit of his age ; and he was unwilling to risk the character which he might hope he had gained by the hazard of conversation. Although he had commenced his poetical career by praising Dryden, when the approbation of Dryden was of the utmost importance to the literary tyro ; when he had become distinguished he did his utmost to depreciate him. He refused to allow merit to any man whose merit was superior to his. He certainly disliked Swift, though he had flattered him with needless hypocrisy of admiration. We have witnessed his conduct towards Pope, from whom he had much to fear, and towards Gay, from whom he had nothing to fear. His court consisted of a number of mediocrits for whom he undoubtedly possessed a deep if a secret contempt. Cleverer men he would not have cared for as courtiers, even could he have procured cleverer men.

Mr. Addison sent for the young Earl of Warwick as he was dying to show him in what peace a Christian could die ; unfortunately he died of brandy.—*Horace Walpole*

What Cato did, and Addison approved,  
Cannot be wrong.—*Eustace Budgell.*

Peace to all such ! but were there one whose fires  
True genius kindles and fair fame inspires ;

The monarch would have been jealous of his slaves. Budgell was one of his courtiers, whose relationship Addison coldly deprecated by the disdainful appellation of "the man who calls me cousin;" the author of some weak poetry and middling prose, who terminated his career by forgery and suicide. Ambrose Phillips was another courtier ; and Thomas Tickell, a good scholar and a maudlin versifier, whom Addison used as an instrument to injure Pope ; Steele, Davenant, Carey, and Colonel Brett, formed the remainder of that circle of slaves who bowed to Addison in his chair at Button's, laughed at his sarcasms levelled against themselves, and hardened him in his conceit, probably with as much malice as he used to harden others in their folly.

When Addison was poor he did not disdain to employ the art of flattery, which the existence of the patron rendered the essential condition of the literary life. He sung weak and obsequious songs to the King, to Somers, to Halifax. Nor did his love of virtue restrain him from promoting his interests by an obeisance to vice ; for he dedicated his opera of "Rosamond" to the Duchess of Marlborough, a woman whose depraved character has been rendered immortally notorious by Pope ; and paid diligent court to the Marquis of Wharton, a man who has been properly denounced as "impious, profligate, and shameless, without regard or appearance of regard to right and wrong."

He was a man wholly incapable of loving. Women he did not care for ; it amused him indeed to watch them ; their pretty airs, their dainty pretensions, their sly vanities, entertained him as the movements of wax dolls entertain a child. They supplied him with food for mirth, for wit, for essays. I should doubt whether, in spite of his papers in the "Spectator," he had a much higher opinion of women than Swift, whose opinion of them was such as not to bring discredit on the sex, but on the depraved taste that could have selected associates capable to inspire such degrading notions of women. That no criminal amours were ever imputed to Addison proves not that he was virtuous but that he was cold. In other respects he assuredly indulged his inclinations when they prompted. He indulged his love of admiration, he indulged his love of hypocrisy, he indulged his love of mischief, he indulged his love of envy, he indulged his love of smoking to excess, he indulged his love of drinking to a degree which compelled a frequent apology for his writing, rendered illegible by his shaking hand. Could he have felt love, he would have been a lover with the same zest with which he drank wine, joked at Steele, and hated Pope. Devotion to his own affairs—a wise devotion, it must be admitted—was the principle by which he was ruled. To self-interest was subordinated most of those qualities and passions which among the greater portion of



Blest with each talent and each art to please,  
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;  
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,  
Bear like the Turk, no brother near the throne;  
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,  
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;

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mankind subordinate self-interest. To his determination to aggrandise himself at the expense of every emotion he was capable of experiencing must be attributed his marriage. Being appointed tutor to the young Earl of Warwick, he determined to become the Earl's father-in-law. The Dowager Countess of Warwick was a woman of great vanity and little wit. Old enough to be Addison's aunt, she seems to have played with him with the petulance and capriciousness of a young coquette, not reluctant to be wooed, but most reluctant to be won. It may be doubted whether Addison's feelings towards Lady Warwick were half so genuine as Pope's feelings towards Lady Mary. Pope has been severely handled because, after his protestations of love had been met with a fit of laughter, he hastened away trembling with rage, and lampooned the thoughtless fair. But his very revulsion of feeling surely presupposes the existence of a passion that was genuine at least in its first movement. Yet Addison submitted to a behaviour from his mistress, if less rude, certainly not less repellant to his feelings as a lover, without exhibiting the slightest discomposure, or testifying the slightest disapprobation. Her jibes were met by his courtliest smiles; her haughty laughter by his humblest bow. He was without love, and therefore without sensibilities. He attacked the widow as he would have stormed a redoubt, careless of the belching guns and the leaden sleet: impelled only by the thought of the glory he should achieve when the height was surmounted and his own flag streamed in the place of the enemy's. He survived his marriage three years; but short as was his matrimonial career, it had formed an experience through which he would not have lived again for the wealth of the kingdom of Morocco. He was the most miserable husband that was ever burdened with a middle-aged shrew who had no respect for him, and for whom he had no love. He maintained indeed his passionless manners, his courtly imperturbability; but he increased his quantity of wine and doubled the number of his visits to Button's. But neither the wine-bottle nor the coffee-house could soften his matrimonial sufferings. He had married a woman who looked upon him as a being utterly beneath her, one whom, if she treated him as civilly as she treated her footman, she thought she treated him as he deserved. The birth of an idiot seemed to illustrate the fruits of an ambition of which the penalties had been imposed with singular severity. Addison may be said to have died of his wife.

His coldness was the quality that rendered him the sagacious observer that he was. In politics he was too violent as a Whig to be useful or keen as a statesman. But as a spectator of manners he was eminently qualified. His passionless nature left his judgment unerring and unbiassed. Out of literature he had no prejudices. He could watch from his secure height the queer masquerade of humanity sweep by without a single emotion to weaken or divert his curiosity. Wealth, reputation, position acquired by

Kill with faint praise, assent with civil leer,  
 And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;  
 Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,  
 Just hint a fault and hesitate dislike;  
 Alike reserved to blame or to commend,  
 A timorous foe and a suspicious friend;

any other means than literature, gave him no pang; he could dispassionately contemplate it as an effect of which he was to find and explain the cause. His business was to give answers to the charades which life uttered to him; and singularly accurate were the answers he gave. His sense of the ridiculous was extraordinarily keen, but pathos he could not find in common life: he had to seek it in religion. Under that definition which makes humour laughter with a sob in it, the humour of Addison does not come. An essential of his humour is satire; but it is satire so gentle, so caressing, that it may well take the name of humour. As a writer he does not go deep; his essays resemble the outlines which some painters throw off by way of giving preliminary embodiment, so to speak, to their fancies, which but for this catching of them might be subtle enough to evade realization. Wanting in details, the fulness of their life is implied rather than expressed. But the implication carries with it the impressiveness of a laborious expression. It would have been marred by details. You can picture him with his demure, shy eyes, sitting in his arm-chair near the coffee-house chimney, pretending not to hear the boasts of the Turkey merchant to the attentive 'Change Alley broker; pretending not to observe the vanity of the beau who sits with his leg turned out to show off his calf and his pink-heeled shoe; pretending not to mark the politeness of the coffee-house keeper to those who wear lace, and his inattention to those who wear dirty linen. At church he pays less attention to his Prayer-book than to the complexion of the clergyman or to the haughty air of Aminta as she kneels at the Thanksgiving prayer, or to the number of curls in Amaryllis's full-bottom wig. At the playhouse he does not think of the tragedy to which he appears to pay the most complimentary attention, but amuses himself with counting the number of punks in the pit, or with reckoning from how many paint-pots the tragic queen has culled the face which the rows of beaux near the footlights are ogling, or with guessing the tumblers of brandy the tragic king will drink when he has doffed the purple and emerges from the stage door in a dark street behind the theatre in his frowsy toupée and his dirty stockings. He does not care to denude life. He is satisfied to lift a corner of the disguise and take a peep. He is content to see Chloe cramming her mouth with her plumpers, gumming on her eyebrows, hiding her warts with party patches, powdering her crows' feet, and practising her **simpers**, without following the chair that carries her away towards the **Mall**. If he hints his doubts of Chloe taking all these pains for her husband, he does not directly tell you that my Lord Snapwit is waiting for her chair to pass at the windows of White's chocolate house.

Addison when young had been up to the waist in poverty, and had scrambled out of the ditch after the usual fashion of those times by laying hold of the hand of a patron. He was a clumsy flatterer; which may be attributed to his pride. But he did not disdain to flatter those who could

Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieged,  
 And so obliging that he ne'er obliged ;  
 Like Cato, give his little senate laws,  
 And sit attentive to his own applause ;  
 While wits and templars every sentence raise,  
 And wonder with a foolish face of praise—

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help him, any more than he disdained to listen to the flattery of those who could do him no good.

Poets were not likely to gain much by "great Nassau," although no monarch was ever more liberally bemused. But the King had ministers who were better patrons ; and of his ministers undeniably the most munificent patron was Somers. In Somers Addison found the friend who may be first said to have drawn him to dry land. He next turned to Montague, to whom he addressed some Latin verses. His flattery served him even better with Halifax than with Somers. According to the thinking of those times a hero could not be wholly a hero until he had become the hero of a poem. The victory of Blenheim had been won by Marlborough ; the country was intoxicated with the success. The people roared, the cannons thundered, all Grub Street sang, but sang so badly, that Lord Godolphin found it necessary to look about for a poet. He applied to Lord Halifax, who named Addison. Addison, who was then living in rags and poverty up a two-stair back in the Haymarket, was politely waited upon by Mr. Boyle, who communicated Godolphin's wish that he would write a poem on Marlborough. Addison set to work and produced the "Campaign." The poem was pronounced a masterpiece by an age that never read Milton, that looked upon Shakspeare as a poet more barbarous than Cædmon, that accepted Monsieur Boileau as the perpetual dictator of art, and my Lord Dorset as a nobler poet than Dryden. His reward was immediate ; he was at once made Commissioner of Appeals. Addison had already drunk from the jewelled chalice of the patron when he had received his three hundred pounds a year to travel on ; but this Commissionership was the first rising above the horizon of that star which was so rapidly to soar to its meridian. Honours fell upon him thick and fast. He was made Under-Secretary of State ; he was made Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Wharton) ; he was made Keeper of the Records in Birmingham's Tower ; the Queen solicited his dedications ; he was made Secretary to the Regency ; he was made Secretary of State.

Such was the Right Honourable Joseph Addison's campaign, of which the origin was the simile of the angel which he had introduced into the campaign of Marlborough. A very literal man might imagine that it needed something more than a few lines of poetry to bear him through so long a line of honours ; yet it must have been the simile of the angel, and nothing more, that did it. Whoever impartially reads the life of Addison must pronounce him to have been conspicuously unequal to the duties of any one of the various posts he filled, unless that of the Keeper of the Records in Birmingham's tower be excepted. As an orator he was totally deficient. Whether from nervousness, from modesty, or from incapacity to

Who but must laugh if such a man there be?  
 Who would not weep if Atticus were he?—*Pope*.  
 That awful form which, so the heavens decree,  
 Must still be lov'd and still deplor'd by me;  
 In nightly visions seldom fails to rise,  
 Or rous'd by Fancy, meets my waking eyes.

convey his thoughts, he seldom spoke in the House; and when he spoke, the few that might try to hear him could not understand him. Pope declared that he could not issue an order without losing his time in quest of fine expressions. It is not to be expected that a man should discharge with mechanical precision the duties of a post to which he is just appointed. Such precision, at all events, was not expected from Addison when he was appointed Secretary of State. But it was naturally thought that a man who had served as Under-Secretary of State, who had occupied various important positions in the administration of Government, would not come to a post that might, indeed, be more onerous, but little dissimilar to those to which he was used, wholly ignorant of its duties. Yet it is universally allowed that Addison was singularly unequal to his work as Secretary of State. "I received," wrote Lady Mary Montagu to Pope, "the news of Mr. Addison's being declared Secretary of State with the less surprise in that I knew that post was almost offered to him before. At that time he declined it, and I really believe that he would have done well to have declined it now. Such a post as that, and such a wife as the Countess, do not seem to be, in prudence, eligible for a man that is asthmatic, and we may see the day when he will be heartily glad to resign them both." Lady Mary prophesied truly. Discovering his incapacity, Addison procured his dismissal, and retreated to his Countess and his books with a retiring pension of fifteen hundred pounds a year.

One of Addison's greatest admirers, who in this single instance has suffered his zeal to impair his judgment, has affirmed a proposition or two that must startle or bewilder any one even superficially acquainted with the literature of the eighteenth century in England. "In Addison's days," says Thackeray, "you could scarcely show him a literary performance, a sermon, a poem, or a piece of literary criticism, but he felt he could do better. His justice," he continues, "must have made him indifferent. He didn't praise, because he measured his compeers by a higher standard than common people have. How was he who was so tall to look up to any but the loftiest genius? He must have stooped to put himself on a level with most men." So far from this being the truth, it is certain that Addison had a very particular regard for the judgment of his friends; that he handed his compositions about with nervous solicitude to procure correction and improvement. Nor can it be pretended that as a poet he was superior, not to Pope, to Swift, to Arbuthnot, to Young, to whom it would be indeed absurd to compare him; but to John Phillips and Ambrose Phillips, to Granville, to Parnell, to Garth, to Hughes, nay, let me search the depths, to Sprat, to Congreve (as a poet), to Blackmore, to Fenton, to Isaac Watts. If he be not better than these, than whom among his contemporaries is he better as a poet? In his poems better specimens of bathos can be found than in any book of poetry to be seen in any second-hand

If business calls or crowded courts invite,  
 Th' unblemish'd statesman seems to strike my sight.  
 If in the stage I seek to soothe my care,  
 I meet his soul which breathes in Cato there ;  
 If, pensive, to the moral shades I rove,  
 His shape o'ertakes me in the lonely grove.  
 'Twas there of just and good he reason'd strong ;  
 Clear'd some great truth or rais'd some serious song ;  
 There patient, show'd us the wise course to steer,  
 A candid censor and a friend severe ;  
 There taught us how to live ; and (oh ! too high,  
 The price of knowledge) taught us how to die.—*Tickell.*

The great satirist who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it, who without inflicting a wound effected a great social reform, and who reconciled wit and virtue after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy and virtue by fanaticism.—*Macaulay.*

If Swift's life was the most wretched, I think Addison's was

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bookseller's shop in London. Some of his lines are exquisitely absurd; and some of them are totally devoid of meaning. As a dramatist he was inferior to the madman Lee, to Edmund Smith, whose "Phædra" is as a work of art superior to "Cato," and to John Gay, whose "Beggars' Opera" is worth a hundred dozen "Rosamonds." He was wholly incapable of portraying the passion of love; his personages are destitute of individuality, being mere figures of straw dressed in Roman costume, who declaim the dreariest heroics that ever forced our ancestors to rap their snuff-boxes or raise their catcalls with impatience. His "Simile of the Angel" and about six quotations from "Cato" live, and his hymn is as immortal as the religion it celebrates. But having said this, what more can be said for Addison as a poet or a dramatist? That officious admiration which gives him excellences to which indeed he aspired but which he never reached, is surely ill-judged. Posterity has justly awarded him all the honour that is due when it has pronounced him to have been one of the greatest humourists in the English language, one of the purest writers, the great reformer of English society who restored to the people of Great Britain their religion which had long been a fugitive, and their virtues which had long been exiles. He cleansed their wit, which was clouded by obscenity. He illuminated their literature by the diffusion of soft and radiant graces. He achieved for piety the alliance of genius, and for morality the advocacy of wit. As a prose writer, as an essayist indeed, it would be almost impossible to overstate the services he has rendered to his countrymen; but that he is entitled to the character which has been given him as a man and a poet, that his character was as stainless as his prose, that his genius was as universal as his humour, those perhaps who admire him with the wisest appreciation will most strenuously deny.—*ED.*

the most enviable. A life prosperous and beautiful—a calm death—an immense fame and affection afterwards for his happy and spotless name.—*Thackeray*.

Thus Addison by lords caress'd  
Was left in foreign lands distress'd ;  
Forgot at home, became, for hire,  
A travelling tutor to a squire.  
But wisely left the Muse's hill,  
To business shap'd the poet's quill,  
Let all his barren laurels fade,  
Took up himself the courtier's trade ;  
And, grown a minister of state,  
Saw poets at his levée wait.—*Swift*.

He was not free with his superiors. He was rather mute in his society on some occasions ; but when he began to be company, he was full of vivacity, and went on in a noble stream of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every one to him.—*Young*.

The misfortune of Mr. Addison's character is this. He is known only to most readers, at least to most scholars, as a man of the gentlest manners and as a polite writer. Under the last idea, we admire the elegance of his mind, the softness of his ridicule, the beauty of his moral sentiments, and the graces of his imagination. But he had another and very different character. He was a keen party man, and when heated in political controversy, he could be as *declamatory*, and more *vehement* than I have thought fit to represent him. In proof of this, I refer you to all his political writings, but more especially to his *Whig-Examiner*, written with a poignancy and severity which could hardly have been expected from Mr. Addison. This then was his *political* character.—*Bishop Hurd*.

## Sir Samuel Garth.

1672–1719.

And Garth, the best good Christian he,  
Although he knows it not.—*Pope*.

Garth was a most amiable man ; it was said of him “ that no physician knew his art more nor his trade less.” The vivacity

of his conversation made Garth an universal favourite both with Whigs and Tories, when party-rage ran high.—*Warton*.

His personal character seems to have been social and liberal. He communicated himself through a very wide extent of acquaintance; and though firm in a party, at a time when firmness included virulence, yet he imparted his kindness to those who were not supposed to favour his principles. He was an early encourager of Pope, and was at once the friend of Addison and Granville.<sup>1</sup>—*Johnson*.

One of the most agreeable memories connected with Button's is that of Garth, a man whom, for the sprightliness and generosity of his nature, it is a pleasure to name. He was one of the most intelligent and amiable of a most intelligent and amiable class of men.—*Leigh Hunt*.

Garth, the accomplished and benevolent, whom Steele has described so charmingly, of whom Codrington said, that his character was "all beauty," and whom Pope himself called the best of Christians without knowing it.—*Thackeray*.

His character appears to have presented a rare compound of bland and conciliatory manners with an independent spirit. His labours at the College of Physicians were devoted to purposes of charity, which then engaged the attention of that body. His literary talents were applied to satirize the unworthy members of his profession, and to elevate its character. He was an uncommon instance of a man possessing literary attainments and acquiring professional eminence. In those days, and even so late as the time of Darwin, the pursuit of the belles lettres was not inimical to the extension of a medical practice, and Garth's celebrated satire on a portion of his professional brethren introduced him into all that a physician most prizes.—"*Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*."

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<sup>1</sup> Granville (Lord Lansdowne) has been immortalized by Pope as "Granville the polite." His life presents few features of interest. Johnson has said of him that "he copied the wrong as well as the right from his masters, and may be supposed to have learnt obscenity from Wycherley as he learned mythology from Waller." His verses are without merit, though I have sometimes quoted him. In an address to Garth "in his sickness," he petitions Apollo to "defend his darling son,"

"On whom, like Atlas, the whole world's reclined."—*ED.*

## Nicholas Rowe.

1673-1718.

Rowe's genius was rather delicate and soft than strong and pathetic ; his compositions soothe us with a tranquil and tender sort of complacency, rather than cleave the heart with pangs of commiseration. His distresses are entirely founded on the passion of love. His diction is extremely elegant and chaste, and his versification highly melodious. His plays are declamations rather than dialogues, and his characters are general and undistinguished from each other.—*Warton, on Pope.*

As to his person, it was graceful and well-made ; his face regular and of manly beauty. As his soul was well lodged, so its animal and rational faculties excelled in a high degree. He had a quick and fruitful invention, a deep penetration, and a large compass of thought ; with singular dexterity and easiness in making his thoughts understood. He was master of both parts of polite learning, especially the classical authors, both Greek and Latin ; understood the French, Italian, and Spanish languages, and spoke the first fluently and the other two tolerably well.—*Wetwood.*

Rowe, in Mr. Pope's opinion, maintained a decent character, but had no heart. Mr. Addison was justly offended with some behaviour which arose from that want, and estranged himself from him ; which Rowe felt very severely. Mr. Pope, their common friend, knowing this, took an opportunity, at some juncture of Mr. Addison's advancement, to tell him how poor Rowe was grieved at his displeasure, and what satisfaction he expressed at Mr. Addison's good fortune, which he expressed so naturally, that he (Mr. Pope) could not but think him sincere. Mr. Addison replied, "I do not suspect that he feigned ; but the levity of his heart is such that he is struck with any new adventure, and it would affect him just in the same manner if he heard I was going to be hanged." Mr. Pope said he could not deny but Mr. Addison understood Rowe well.—*Warburton.*

Whence has Rowe his reputation ? From the reasonableness and propriety of some of his schemes, from the elegance of his diction, and the suavity of his verse. He seldom moves either piety or terror ; but he often elevates the sentiments ; he seldom



pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear, and often improves the understanding.—*Fohnson*.

Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest ;  
Blest in thy genius, in thy love too blest.—*Pope*.

### Isaac Watts.

1674–1748.

A man of true poetical feeling, careless indeed for the most part, and inattentive too often to those niceties which constitute elegancies of expression, but frequently sublime in his conceptions, and masterly in his execution. Pope, I have heard, had placed him once in the “Dunciad,” but on being advised to read before he judged him, was convinced that he deserved other treatment, and thrust somebody’s blockhead into the gap.—*Cowper*.

Few books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his “Improvement of the Mind,” of which the radical principles may indeed be found in “Locke’s Conduct of the Understanding ;” but they are so expanded and ramified by Watts as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others may be charged with deficiency in his duty if this book is not recommended. I have mentioned his “Treatise of Theology,” as distinct from his other productions ; but the truth is that whatever he took in hand was by his incessant solicitude for souls converted into theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his works ; under his direction it may be truly said *theologiæ philosophia ancillatur*, philosophy is subservient to evangelical instruction ; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at least wishing to be better. The attention is caught by indirect instruction, and he that sat down only to reason, is on a sudden compelled to pray.—*Fohnson*.

### Dr. Samuel Clarke.<sup>1</sup>

1675–1729.

I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius, Dr. Pearson, and Dr. Clarke.—*Fohnson*.

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<sup>1</sup> He had been for twelve years chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich, and Boyle Lecturer in 1704-5, when he took for his subject the “Being and

Dr. Samuel Clarke stepped also aside from the notions commonly received concerning the Trinity; but his modification of this doctrine was not so remote from the popular and orthodox hypothesis, as the sentiments of Whiston. His method of inquiring into that incomprehensible subject was modest, and at least promised fair as a guide to truth. For he did not begin by abstract and metaphysical reasonings, in his illustrations of this doctrine, but turned his first researches to the word and to the testimony, persuaded that, as the doctrine of the Trinity was a matter of mere revelation, all human explications of it must be tried by the declarations of the New Testament, interpreted by the rules of grammar, and the principles of sound criticism.—*Dr. Maclaine.*

One of the most accurate, learned, and judicious writers this age has produced.—*Addison.*

### Dr. Arbuthnot.

1675-1735.

He lived and died a devout and sincere Christian.—*Chesterfield.*

I think Dr. Arbuthnot the first man among the eminent writers in Queen Anne's time. He was the most universal genius, being an excellent physician, a man of deep learning, and a man of much humour.—*Johnson.*

He was a man that could do everything but walk.<sup>1</sup>—*Swift.*

Arbuthnot was a man of consummate probity, integrity, and sweetness of temper. He had infinitely more learning than Pope or Swift, and as much wit and humour as either of them. . . . It is known that he gave numberless hints to Pope, Swift, and Gay, of some of the most striking parts of their works.—*Warton.*

There are passages in Arbuthnot's satirical works which we cannot distinguish from Swift's best writing.—*Macaulay.*

Attributes of God, and the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion." He had also translated Newton's "Optics," and was become chaplain to the Queen (1712), Rector of St. James's, Westminster, and D.D. of Cambridge. The accusations of heterodoxy that followed him through his after life date from this year, in which, besides the edition of "Cæsar," he published a book on the "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity."—*Morley.*

<sup>1</sup> He suffered from a cruel internal malady.—*E.D.*

One of the wisest, wittiest, most accomplished, gentlest, of mankind.—*Thackeray*.

He is usually allowed to have been the most learned as well as one of the most witty and humorous members of the Scriblerus Club.—*Biog. Brit.*

I know not but one might search these eight volumes ("Lives of the Poets") with a candle, as the prophet says, to find a man, and not find one, unless perhaps Arbuthnot were he.—*Cowper*.

The only Scotch writer that appears to have excelled in humour is Dr. Arbuthnot.—*Dr. Hurd*.

## John Phillips.

1676-1708.

The parody on Milton<sup>1</sup> is the only tolerable production of its author.—*Gildon*.

What study could confer, Phillips had obtained; but natural deficiency cannot be supplied. He seems not born to greatness and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often surprise with unexpected excellence.—*Johnson*.

The Grecian philosophers have had their lives written, their morals commended, and their sayings recorded. Mr. Phillips had all the virtues to which most of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.—*E. Smith*.

It was the boast of John Phillips, the poet of the English vintage, that the cider-land had ever been faithful to the throne, and that all the pruning-hooks of her thousand orchards had been beaten into swords for the service of the ill-fated Stuarts.—*Macaulay*.

## Henry St. John, Earl of Bolingbroke.

1678-1751.

Pope used to speak of him as a being of superior order, that had condescended to visit this lower world; in particular when the last comet appeared and approached near the earth he told

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<sup>1</sup> The "Splendid Shilling," the only performance that survives the author.—*Ed.*

some of his acquaintance "it was sent only to convey Lord Bolingbroke home again ; just as a stage-coach stops at your door to take up a passenger."—*Warton*.

Bolingbroke professed himself a Deist, believing in a general Providence, but doubting (though by no means rejecting) the immortality of the soul and a future state.—*Lord Chesterfield*.

Sir, he was a scoundrel and a coward ; a scoundrel for discharging a blunderbuss against religion and morality ; a coward because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman (Mallet) to draw the trigger after his death.—*Johnson*.

What advantage do we derive from such writings ? What delight can a man find in employing a capacity which might be usefully exerted for the noblest purposes, in a sort of sullen labour in which, if the author could succeed, he is obliged to own that nothing could be more fatal to mankind than his success ?—*Burke*.

The canker'd Bolingbroke.—*Addison*.

Bolingbroke, who of all those rascals and knaves that have been lying against me these late years has certainly the best parts and the most knowledge. He is a scoundrel, but he is a scoundrel of a higher class than Chesterfield.—*George II*.

Though Lord Bolingbroke had no idea of wit, his satire was keener than any one's.—*Lord Hervey*.

He was a man of eminent talents but of no fixed principles, or these hung so loosely about him as to be shaken off whenever it suited his interests or convenience. His ambition was in advance even of his abilities ; and to gratify it he seems often to have deviated from the course of a wise or straightforward man. . . . A striking evidence of his powers was the sway which he held over minds of no secondary order, over statesmen and men of letters. Lord Chesterfield, the worldly and the witty, and who thought himself above his fellows in penetration, thought extravagantly of his talents whilst he cared nothing for his principles ; Prior gave him his love ; Swift, a caustic observer of men and manners, his esteem and regard ; Arbuthnot, his applause ; and Pope, almost his adoration.—*James Prior*.

One of those characters that seemed formed by nature to take delight in struggling with opposition, and whose most agreeable hours are passed in storms of their own creating.—*Goldsmith*.

'The graver part of the world who have not been quite so much given up to rockets and masquing are amused with a book of Lord Bolingbroke's, just published, but written long ago. It is composed of three letters, the first to Lord Cornbury on the Spirit of Patriotism ; and the two others to Mr. Lyttleton (but with neither of their names) on the Idea of a Patriot King and the State of Parties on the late King's Accession. . . . The book by no means answered my expectations ; the style, which is his *forte*, is very fine ; the deduction, and impossibility of drawing a consequence from what he is saying, as bad and obscure as in his famous "Dissertation on Parties ;" you must know the man to guess his meaning. Not to mention the absurdity and impracticability of this kind of system, there is a long speculative dissertation on the origin of government, and even that greatly stolen from other writers, and that all on a sudden dropped, while he hurries into his own times, and then preaches (he of all men !) on the duty of preserving decency.—*H. Walpole.*

Of a most powerful natural capacity, to which were added splendid attainments, the result of a careful education acting upon an ardent and grasping mind—of great, but misdirected ambition—Lord Bolingbroke was one of those men by whom Fate dealt unkindly in subjecting them to the temptations of a political career. There is no reason indeed to conclude that Bolingbroke, untempted by that ambition to which he sacrificed so much, would have adorned private life by purity and temperance, which were not the fashionable virtues of the day. When even the high-minded and reflecting Somers could tarnish his great qualities by licentious habits, there can be little cause to wonder that one who, like Bolingbroke, lived in a whirlwind, could be profane without a blush and grossly immoral without contrition.—"*Life of the Duchess of Marlborough.*"

O Bolingbroke ! O favourite of the skies,  
O born to gifts by which the noblest rise !  
Improv'd in arts by which the brightest please,  
Intent to business, and polite for ease ;  
Sublime in eloquence, where loud applause  
Hath styl'd thee patron of a nation's cause !—*Parnell.*

Bolingbroke was a man of brilliant parts, with much quickness and penetration, and extraordinary powers of application and capacity for business. He had accomplishments and at-

tainments' that rendered him the delight and ornament of society ; and possessed warm and generous affections that endeared him to his private friends. But with these merits and qualities he had defects which more than counter-balanced them.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1835.

## Thomas Parnell.

1679–1717.

The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehension or fertility of mind. Of the little that appears still less is his own. His praise must be derived from the easy sweetness of his diction ; in his verse there is more happiness than pains ; he is sprightly without effort, and always delights though he never ravishes ; everything is proper, yet everything seems casual. If there is some appearance of elaboration in the "Hermit," the narrative, as it is less airy, is less pleasing.—*Johnson*.

With softest manners, gentle arts, adorn'd ;  
Blest in each science, blest in every strain.—*Pope*.

He appears to me to be the last of that great school that had modelled itself upon the ancients, and taught English poetry to resemble what the generality of mankind have allowed to excel. A studious and correct observer of antiquity, he set himself to consider nature with the lights it lent him ; and he found that the more aid he borrowed from the one, the more delightfully he resembled the other. . . Parnell is ever happy in the selection of his images, and scrupulously careful in the choice of his subjects.—*Goldsmith*.

The fame of Parnell rests on the "Hermit," one of the most beautiful poems in our language ; the "Rise of Woman," the "Fairy Tale," and the "Allegory on Man," are perhaps next in merit. His characteristics are ease, sweetness, and dignity.—*Fames Prior*.

It is sufficient to run over Cowley once ; but Parnell, after the fiftieth reading, is as fresh as at the first.—*David Hume*.

## George Psalmanazar.

1679-1763.

George Psalmanazar, who never told his real name or precise birthplace, was an impostor from Languedoc. He had been educated in a Jesuit college, where he heard stories of the Jesuit missions in Japan and Formosa, which suggested to him how he might thrive abroad as an enterprising native. He enlisted as a soldier, and had in his character of Japanese only a small notoriety until, at Sluys, a dishonest young chaplain of Brigadier Lauder's Scotch regiment saw through the trick and favoured it, that he might recommend himself to the Bishop of London, for promotion. He professed to have converted Psalmanazar, baptized him, with the Brigadier for godfather, got his discharge from the regiment, and launched him upon London, under the patronage of Bishop Compton. Here Psalmanazar, who on his arrival was between 19 and 20 years old, became famous in the religious world. He supported his fraud by the invention of a language and letters, and of a Formosan religion. . . . His gross and puerile absurdities in print and conversation—such as his statement that the Formosans sacrificed 18,000 male infants every year, and that the Japanese studied Greek as a learned tongue—excited a distrust that would have been fatal to the success of his fraud even with the credulous, if he had not forced himself to give colour to the story by acting the savage in men's eyes. But he must really, it was thought, be a savage who fed upon roots, herbs, and raw flesh. He made, however, so little by the imposture, that he at last confessed himself a cheat, and got his living as a well-conducted bookseller's hack.—*Henry Morley.*

This extraordinary person lived and died in a house in Old-street, where Dr. Johnson was witness to his talents and virtues, and to his final preference of the Church of England, after having studied, disgraced and adorned so many modes of worship. The name he went by was not supposed by his friends to be that of his family; but all inquiries were vain; his reasons for concealing his original were penitentiary. He deserved no other name than that of the impostor, he said.—*Mrs. Piozzi.*

## Elijah Fenton.

1683-1730.

Fenton was an elegant scholar, and had an exquisite taste ; the books he translated for Pope in the "Odyssey" are superior to Broome's. In his "Miscellanies" are many pieces worthy of notice ; particularly his "Epistle to Southerne ;" the "Fair Nun," imitated from Fontaine ; "Olivia, a Character ;" an "Ode to the Sun ;" and one to Lord Gower. . . . His tragedy of "Mariamne" has undoubtedly merit, though the diction be too figurative and ornamental.—*Warton*.

He died of indolence.—*Pope*.

A poet, blest beyond the poet's fate,  
Whom heaven kept sacred from the proud and great :  
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,  
Content with science in the vale of peace.—*Ibid*.

Strong were thy thoughts, yet reason bore the sway :  
Humble, yet learn'd ; though innocent, yet gay.  
So pure of heart that thou mightst safely show  
Thy inmost bosom to thy hated foe ;  
Careless of wealth, thy bliss a calm retreat,  
Far from the insults of the scornful great ;  
Thence looking with disdain on proudest things,  
Thou deemedst mean the pageantry of kings,  
Who build their pride on trappings of a throne,  
A painted riband or a glittering stone,  
Uselessly bright ! 'Twas thine the soul to raise  
To nobler objects, such as angels praise.—*Broome*.

Of his morals and his conversation the account is uniform ; he was never named but with praise and fondness, as a man in the highest degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given of him by the Earl of Orrery, his pupil ; such is the testimony of Pope ; and such were the suffrages of all who could boast of his acquaintance.—*Johnson*.

Sweet Fancy's bloom in Fenton's lay appears,  
And the ripe judgment of instructive years.

*Savage*, "The Wanderer."

Mr. Fenton was my tutor ; he taught me to read English, and attended me through the Latin tongue from the age of



seven to thirteen years. He translated double the number of books in the "Odyssey" that Pope has owned. His reward was a trifle—an arrant trifle. He has even told me that he thought Pope feared him more than he loved him. He had no opinion of Pope's heart, and declared him to be, in the words of Bishop Atterbury, "*mens curva in corpore curvo*"—a crooked mind in a crooked body. Poor Fenton died of a great easy chair and two bottles of port a day. He was one of the worthiest and most modest men that ever belonged to the court of Apollo.—*Orrery.*

## Bishop Berkeley.

1684-1753.

So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence and so much humility I did not think had been the portion of any but angels until I saw this gentleman.—*Bishop Atterbury.*

Berkeley gained the patronage and friendship of Lord Burlington not only by his true politeness and the peculiar charms of his conversation, which was exquisite, but by his profound and perfect skill in architecture.—*Warton.*

When Bishop Berkeley said "There was no matter,"  
And proved it—'twas no matter what he said.  
They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,  
Too subtle for the airiest human head ;  
And yet who can believe it ?—*Byron.*

Being in company with a gentleman who thought fit to maintain Dr. Berkeley's ingenious philosophy, that nothing exists but as perceived by some mind ; when the gentleman was going away, Dr. Johnson said to him, "Pray, sir, don't leave us ; for we may perhaps forget to think of you ; and then you will cease to exist."—" *Johnsoniana.*"

I went to Court to-day on purpose to present Mr. Berkeley, one of your Fellows of Dublin College, to Lord Berkeley of Stratton. That Mr. Berkeley is a very ingenious man and great philosopher, and I have mentioned him to all the ministers, and have given them some of his writings ; and I will favour him as much as I can.—*Swift.*

- Even in a bishop I can spy desert ;  
Secker is decent, Rundell has a heart ;  
Manners with candour are to Benson given ;  
To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.—*Pope.*

We are now mad about tar-water, on the publication of a book that I will send you, written by Dr. Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. The book contains every subject from Tar-water to the Trinity ; however, all the women read and understand it no more than they would if it were intelligible.—*Horace Walpole.*

That all the arguments of Berkeley, though otherwise intended are, in reality, merely sceptical, appears from this—that they admit of no answer, and produce no conviction.—*Hume.*

Bishop Berkeley destroyed the world in one volume octavo, and nothing remained after his time but mind—which experienced a similar fate from the hand of Mr. Hume in 1737 ; so that with all the tendency to destroy there remains nothing left for destruction.—*Sydney Smith.*

The celebrated and ingenious Bishop of Cloyne, in his "Principles of Human Knowledge," denies without any ceremony the existence of every kind of matter whatever ; nor does he think this conclusion one that need, in any degree, stagger the incredulous. "Some truths there are," says he, "so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need only open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth—in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world—have not any subsistence without a mind." This deduction, however singular, was readily made from the theory of our perceptions laid down by Descartes and Mr. Locke, and at that time generally received in the world. According to that theory we perceive nothing but ideas which are present in the mind, and which have no dependence whatever on external things ; so that we have no evidence of the existence of anything external to our minds. Berkeley appears to have been altogether in earnest in maintaining his scepticism concerning the existence of matter ; and the more so, as he conceived this system to be highly favourable to the doctrines of religion, since it removed matter from the world, which had already been the stronghold of the atheists.—*Sir David Brewster.*

## Dr. Young.

1684-1765.

Young had much of a sublime genius, though without common sense ; so that his genius having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombast. This made him pass a *foolish youth*, the sport of peers and poets ; but his having a very good heart enabled him to support the clerical character when he assumed it, first with decency, and afterwards with honour.—*Pope*.

Were everything that Young ever wrote to be published, he could only appear, perhaps, in a less respectable light as a poet, and more despicable as a dedicator ; he would not pass for a worse Christian or a worse man.—*Herbert Croft*.

Young is not done justice to, popular as he is with a certain class of readers. He has never yet had a critic to display and make current his most peculiar and emphatic beauties. He is of all poets the one to be studied by a man who is about to break the golden chains that bind him to the world—his gloom then does not appal or deject. . . . the dark river of his solemn genius sweeps the thoughts onwards to Eternity.—*Lord Lytton*.

I am reminded here of Young, whose "Night Thoughts" (my favourite work) was composed, I think, in his latest years. . . . I was dining in a parliamentary party with Lord Castlereagh, and he produced for our amusement in the evening some volumes of original letters, curiously preserved by Lady C. My curiosity was immediately fixed by that of Dr. Young. I professed my enthusiastic admiration of his "Night Thoughts," and begged to see and admire as a relic the original letter of such a man. My request was immediately granted with a significant smile ; and what had I the mortification to read ? *Horresco referens* ! It was the most fawning, servile, mendicant letter, perhaps, that ever was penned by a clergyman, imploring the mistress of George II. to exert her interest for his preferment.<sup>1</sup> —"*Memoirs of H. More*."

In my youthful days, Young's "Night Thoughts" was a very favourite book, especially with ladies ; I knew more than one lady who had a copy of it, in which particular passages were

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<sup>1</sup> Where Young must torture his invention  
To flatter *knaves* or lose his *pension*.—*Swift*.

marked for her by some popular preacher. Young's poem, the "Last Day" contains, amidst much absurdity, several fine lines ; what an *enormous* thought is this !—

Those overwhelming armies whose command  
Said to one empire "fall," another "stand ;"  
*Whose rear lay wrapt in night, while breaking dawn  
Roused the broad front, and call'd the battle on.*—Rogers.

What Young, satiric and sublime, has writ,  
Whose life is virtue and whose muse is wit.—*Savage.*

His character was that of the true Christian divine, his heart was in his profession. It is reported that once preaching in his turn at St. James's, and being unable to gain attention, he sat down and burst into tears. His conversation was of the same nature as his works, and showed a solemn cast of thought to be natural to him ; death, futurity, judgment, eternity, were his common topics. When at home in the country he spent many hours in the day walking among the graves in the church-yard. In his garden he had an alcove, painted as if with a bench to repose on ; on approaching near enough to discover the deception, the following motto was seen : "Invisibilia non decipiunt."—"Memoir of Dr. Young," 1807.

Of Young's poems it is difficult to give any general character, for he has no uniformity of manner ; one of his pieces has no great resemblance to another. He began to write early and continued long ; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are sometimes smooth and sometimes rugged ; his style is sometimes concatenated and sometimes abrupt ; sometimes diffusive and sometimes concise. His plans seem to have started in his mind at the present moment ; and his thoughts appear the effect of chance, sometimes adverse, and sometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgment.—*Dr. Johnson.*

## Eustace Budgell.

1685–1736.

Let Budgell charge low Grub-street on his quill,  
And write whate'er he please, except my will.—*Pope.*

Pert Budgell came next, and demanding the bays,  
Said those works must be good which had Addison's praise ;

But Apollo reply'd, child Eustace, 'tis known  
Most authors will praise whatsoever's their own.

*Duke of Buckingham.*

We talked of a man's drowning himself. Johnson: "I should never think it time to make away with myself." I put the case of Eustace Budgell, who was accused of forging a will, and sunk himself in the Thames before the trial of its authenticity came on. "Suppose, sir," said I, "that a man is absolutely sure that, if he lives a few days longer, he shall be detected in a fraud, the consequence of which will be utter disgrace and expulsion from society." Johnson: "Then, sir, let him go abroad to a distant country; let him go to some place where he is *not* known; don't let him go to the devil where he *is* known."—*Boswell's "Johnson."*

## Allan Ramsay.

1685-1758.

Allan Ramsay was the first who wrote with success in the language more peculiarly belonging to the country. This poet was born in Lanarkshire, in 1686, and entered life as a wig maker in the city of Edinburgh, where he finally became a bookseller. The homely rhymes which had maintained an obscure existence from early times, and been recently practised with something like revived effect by poets named Semple and Pennycuik, were adopted and improved by Ramsay, who found further models in the poems of Butler, Dryden, and Pope. After producing some short pieces of considerable humour, he published, in 1726, his celebrated pastoral drama of

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<sup>1</sup> Budgell drowned himself to escape a prosecution on account of forging the will of Dr. Tindall, in which he had inserted a provision of two thousand pounds for himself. He contributed about forty papers to the *Spectator*. He was first cousin to Addison, whom he accompanied to Ireland as private secretary when Addison was secretary to Lord Wharton. In 1717 he procured, through the influence of Addison, who was then Secretary of State for Ireland, the post of Accountant and Comptroller General of the Irish Revenues, which he lost (1718) by satirizing the Duke of Bolton. His ruin was completed by speculating in the South Sea Bubble. There was found in his room, after having committed suicide, a slip of paper on which was written, "What Cato did, and Addison approved, cannot be wrong."—ED.

the "Gentle Shepherd," which has become the chief prop of his reputation. This drama depicts the rustics of Scotland in their actual characters, and the language of their every-day life, and yet without any taint of vulgarity. It is full of fine, cordial, natural feeling, has some good descriptive passages, and turns on an event which irresistibly engages the sympathies of the reader.—*R. Chambers.*

In Scotland the scenery, rural economy, and the songs of the peasantry, sung "At the wauking of the fold," presented Ramsay with a much nearer image of pastoral life, and he accordingly painted it with the fresh feeling and enjoyment of nature. Had Sir William Jones understood the dialect of that poet, I am convinced that he would not have awarded the pastoral crown to any other author. Ramsay's shepherds are distinct, intelligible beings, neither vulgar, like the caricatures of Gay, nor fantastic, like those of Fletcher. They afford such a view of a national peasantry as we should wish to acquire by travelling among them, and form a draft entirely devoted to rural manners, which for truth, and beauty, and extent, has no parallel in the richer language of England.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1833.

I spoke of Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," in the Scottish dialect, as the best pastoral that had ever been written; not only abounding with beautiful rural imagery, and just and pleasing sentiments, but being a real picture of manners, and I offered to teach Dr. Johnson to understand it. "No, sir," said he; "I won't learn it. You shall retain your superiority by my not knowing it."—*Boswell.*

Hail, Caledonian bard ! whose rural strains  
Delight the listening hills, and cheer the plains !  
Already polish'd by some hand divine,  
Thy purer ore what furnace can refine ?  
Careless of censure, like the sun shine forth  
In native lustre and intrinsic worth :  
To follow nature is by rules to write ;  
She led the way, and taught the Stagirite.  
From her the critic's taste, the poet's fire,  
Both drudge in vain, till she from heaven inspire.  
By the same guide, instructed how to soar,  
Allan is now what Homer was before.—*Somerville.*

Ramsay, to be sure, is ideal enough ; but there are good

ideas and bad ideas. To be snatched from the commonplaces of life that one might ride on the "curl'd clouds," or penetrate the solitudes of a poet's imagination, is good; but it is not so to leave the busy facts of society merely to get on the platitudes of a barren table-land. Out of a proper reverence to my master's opinion, I have looked again and again at the "Gentle Shepherd," and I am so unfortunate as to think it the flattest rubbish I ever read.—*C. Ollier to Leigh Hunt.*

The mystic humour and exact truth of Ramsay.—*Allan Cunningham.*

## Alexander Pope.

1688–1744.

The wicked asp of Twickenham.—*Lady M. W. Montagu.*

"Leave him as soon as you can," said Addison to me, speaking of Pope, "he will certainly play you some devilish trick else; he has an appetite to satire."—*Ibid.*

I could never get the blockhead to study his grammar.—*Swift.*

His wit is as thick as Tewkesbury mustard.—*Theobald.*

Hard as thy heart and as thy birth obscure.—*Lord Hervey.*<sup>1</sup>

He has a knack at versifying, but in prose I think myself a match for him.—*Curll.*<sup>2</sup>

'Those miserable mountebanks of the day, the poets, disgrace

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hervey was Pope's *Sporus*. He was the second son of the first Earl of Bristol, a family whose odd characteristics had caused Lady M. Montagu to divide mankind into "Men, Women, and Herveys." He married the witty and beautiful "Molly Lepell," and the event was thus celebrated :—

For Venus had never seen bedded  
So perfect a beau and a belle,  
As when Hervey the handsome was wedded  
To the beautiful Molly Lepell.

Lord Hervey was not destitute of wit, though some of his lines have been absurdly overpraised. His recriminations on Pope are the best, indeed the only good things he wrote.—*ED.*

<sup>2</sup> Peace be with Curll, with whom I wave all strife,  
Who pens each felon's and each actor's life;  
Biography that cooks the devil's martyrs,  
And lards with luscious rapes the cheats of Chartres.—*Savage.*

themselves and deny God in running down Pope, the most faultless of poets.—*Byron.*

I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind.

—*Bolingbroke.*

He was about four feet six inches high, very hump-backed and deformed. He wore a black coat, and, according to the fashion of that time, had on a little sword. He had a large and very fine eye, and a long handsome nose; his mouth had those peculiar marks which are always found in the mouths of crooked persons, and the muscles which run across the cheek were so strongly marked that they seemed like small cords.

—*Sir F. Reynolds.*

As truly as Shakspeare is the poet of man, as God made him, dealing with great passions and innate motives, so truly is Pope the poet of society, the delineator of manners, the exposé of those motives which may be called *acquired*, whose spring is in institutions and habits of purely worldly origin.—*James R. Lowell.*

I have observed that Pope had more wit than humour—indeed, he has little or nothing of this last quality, as may be seen by his papers on the “Short Club” in the *Guardian*, June 25 and 26, and his letter to Swift, December 8, 1713, published by Lord Orrery. Mr. Addison’s talent in this mode of writing seems to have excited his emulation, but without success. He saw this, and made I think no more attempts at humour.—

*Dr. Hurd.*

Pope was a Deist, believing in a future state; this he has often owned to me; but when he died, he sacrificed a cock to Esculapius, and suffered the priests who got about him to perform all their absurd ceremonies on his body.—*Lord Chesterfield.*

Inquire between Sunninghill and Oakingham for a young, short, squab gentleman, the very bow of the god of love, and tell me whether he be a proper author to make personal reflections? He may extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern, for had he been born of Grecian parents and his father consequently had by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems, the life of half a day.—*John Dennis.*

The late Lord Somerville, who saw much both of great and brilliant life, told me that he had been in company with Pope, and that after dinner the little man, as he called him, drank



his bottle of Burgundy and was exceedingly gay and entertaining.—*Boswell*.

Considering the correctness, elegance, and utility of his works, the weight of sentiment and the knowledge of man they contain, we may venture to assign him a place *next* to Milton, and *just* above Dryden.—*Warton*, "*Essay on Pope*."

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed.—*Johnson*.

I remember also distinctly (though I have not for this the authority of my journal) that the conversation going on concerning Mr. Pope, I took notice of a report that had been sometimes propagated, that he did not understand Greek. Lord Bathurst said to me that he knew that to be false, for that part of the "*Iliad*" was translated by Mr. Pope in his house in the country; and that in the morning when they assembled at breakfast, Mr. Pope used frequently to repeat with great rapture the Greek lines which he had been translating, and then to give them his version of them and to compare them together.—*Dr. Blair*.<sup>1</sup>

If the author of the "*Dunciad*" be not a humourist, if the poet of the "*Rape of the Lock*" be not a wit, who deserves to be called so? Besides that brilliant genius and immense fame, for both of which we should respect him, men of letters should admire him as being the greatest literary *artist* that England has seen.—*Thackeray*.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope and Dr. Bentley one day met at dinner. Pope being greatly anxious to receive the opinion of that eminent scholar on his translation of "*Homer*," said, "Dr. Bentley, I ordered my bookseller to send you your books. I hope you have received them." Bentley, who was unwilling to express his judgment, pretended not to understand him. "Books, books?" he exclaimed; "what books?" "My '*Homer*,'" replied Pope, "which you did me the honour to subscribe for." "Oh, now I recollect," said Bentley, "your translation. It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope; but you must not call it '*Homer*.'"—*ED.*

The ladies' plaything and the muse's pride.—*Aaron Hill*.

Whose life, severely scann'd, transcends his lays,  
For wit supreme is but his second praise.—*Mallet*.

We owe to the deformities of Pope's person the inimitable beauties of his elaborate verse.—*I. D'Israeli*.

The imitative powers of Pope, who possessed more industry than genius—though his industry was nearly equal to that of the greatest poets—has contrived to render every line faultless; yet it may be said of Pope that his greatest fault consists in having none.—*Ibid*.

The true deacon of the craft.—*Sir W. Scott*.

Pope is not to be compared to Dryden for varied harmony of versification, nor for ease.—*Rogers*.

He is a creature that reconciles all contradictions; he is a beast and a man; a Whig and a Tory; a writer (at one and the same time) of Guardians and Examiners; an asserter of liberty and of the dispensing power of kings; a Jesuitical professor of truth; a base and a foul pretender to candour.—*Lewis Theobald*.

August 17th, 1749: Mr. George Faulkner, of Dublin, told me that Dr. Swift had long conceived a mean opinion of Mr. Pope on account of his jealous, peevish, avaricious nature. The Doctor gave Mr. Pope the property of his "Gulliver," which he sold the copy of for 300*l.*; and gave up to him, in 1727, his share of the copy of the three volumes of their "Miscellanies," which came to 150*l.* The Doctor was angry with Mr. Pope for his satire upon Mr. Addison, whom the former esteemed as an honest, generous and friendly man.—*Dr. Birch*.

## John Gay.<sup>1</sup>

1688–1732.

While a particle of taste remains among us, his songs, lively, witty, humorous, elegant, tender, and pathetic, will certainly be remembered, and must always please.—*Ritson*.

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<sup>1</sup> John Gay was a pale star that shone in a constellation of extraordinary brilliance; and pale as were his rays half that poor lustre was due to the general blaze by which he was surrounded. He was a man of superficial learning, an indifferent poet, and of strong hysterical tendencies. He has

Gay was quite a natural man, wholly without art or design, and spoke just what he thought and as he thought it.—*Pope*.

Gay was never designed by Providence to be more than two-and-twenty by his thoughtlessness and gullibility.—*Swift*.

He wrote with neatness and terseness, *æquali quadam*

been aptly compared to a lap-dog ; but he was a lap-dog without teeth, with the very faintest bark, and with a tail that incessantly wagged. By this active tail he was propelled through life as a boat is sculled through the water by an oar. The dainty carpets he had the happiness to tread kept his paws clean ; so that no one could object to be fawned upon by so very sleek, so very proper, so very a well-kept little animal. Dukes and duchesses made a pet of him ; great wits stroked his sleek coat ; into whatever company he came he was at least sure of his plate of meat carefully cut by the white hand of the hostess. He had his bed made for him on satin cushions ; the faint music of his soft bow-wow, regulated by the bâton of his tail which for ever swayed behind him, was always a welcome sound. It was quite impossible to meet him without stooping to pat him.

Mr. Gay was sent behind the counter when he was a lad. To throw up yards of silk before the ladies ; to listen to their objections ; to hasten up ladders and descend with fresh samples of his master's wares for them to select from ; to open the door and bow to them as they passed out ; were occupations for which Mr. Gay was eminently fitted. His pleasant smile could not have failed to have made him in time an opulent tradesman. But young Gay had a spirit above the counter. Through the slit in the till, he had long and earnestly looked at what he took to be a superior calling to that of measuring silk, and resolved to become Poet. He therefore set to work to make himself as objectionable as he could ; he ceased to wag his tail ; he was reluctant in the discharge of his duty ; he might even have become dissipated, stayed out an hour or two beyond his time, and by evening prowls about Covent Garden and the Mall have collected those experiences which he long after embodied in his poem of "Trivia." His master quickly found that it was impossible to reconcile the character of the haberdasher and the poet. The mercer might indeed break through the bard ; but as a rule the bard prevailed, just as gin prevails when mixed with water. Finding that his business suffered, the mercer turned his clerk out. But Gay was a man not likely to be long out of place ; he had all the qualities which constitute a pleasant, though not perhaps, a useful servitor ; he was sleek, amiable, smiling. The Duchess of Monmouth finding the pretty creature unclaimed, had him brought to her, and appointed him her secretary. This was very well for a commencement. It is true that her Grace treated him rather as a footman than a poet ; but, fortunately for Gay, his sensibilities had been well-disciplined as a counter-clerk ; he took the broadest and most comfortable views of life, careless of the conduct of others so long as he was himself in a position which no one could possibly affirm to be menial. In the service of the duchess he had plenty of leisure, and by this leisure he showed how much he had profited by producing a poem which he called "Rural Sports," which he dedicated to Mr. Pope.

Pope had not yet achieved much reputation, although the "Essay on

*mediocrity*, but certainly without any elevation, frequently without any spirit.—*Warton*.

Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen.—*Courtenay*.

The "Beggar's Opera" is a proof how strangely people will differ in opinion about a literary performance. Burke thinks it has no merit.—*Sir Joshua Reynolds*.

That St. Giles's lampoon, the "Beggar's Opera."—*Byron*.

Criticism" had been praised by the *Spectator*, and had given occasion to Dennis for some of his many brutal though never dull attacks. Gay marked the rising star and turned his face towards it with all proper humility.

Pope took a warm fancy for the sleek, smiling, good-natured bard; introduced him to his friends; admitted him into his confidence; wrote letters to him with the familiarity and perhaps the fondness of a brother.

Here commenced Gay's introduction into the society of that refulgent circle which has earned for the reign of Anne the title of the Augustan age. The members of this circle were not numerous. They were Parnell, a poet of much sweetness; Garth, praised by Pope as a good Christian without knowing it; Rowe, the translator of the "Pharsalia;" Addison and Swift; Arbuthnot, a man of the most luminous genius; and Bolingbroke, the haughty and irascible, of great but misused powers as a statesman and a dialectician. Gay was loved by all these men. Among them his visits were always welcome. Upon the loneliness of Swift, upon the solitude of that pitiless spirit in which baleful presences stirred, generated by the remorseless heart upon which the noblest love of woman beat but to break, Gay came like a flood of sunshine. Pope basked in his genial presence; Garth celebrated him in an Anacreontic epistle of which the flattery is exquisite. Who does not envy this man, possessed not only of the secret of collecting but of keeping such friends about him? It was the achievement of sheer amiability. There was nothing in him to command admiration, fortunately for him,—it was the wagging of the tail that did it all. He was a toy to be played with. No one could be serious with honest John. To Gay, poetry might have been an important business; and if no one else believed in his genius, Gay did. But his friends took his compositions and sported over them as parents sport over the first scribblings of a precocious child. One added a line, another a song; one altered a couplet, another erased an act; and Gay stood by smiling incessantly, his eyes half serious, half merry, interrogating the faces of those about him with a comical earnest look, like a great spoilt child that he was. His friends durst not have taken such liberties with each other; they might indeed drop faint hints with a half-unconscious air, but these hints might just as well have been respectful salutations to a superior genius. But they clapped Johnny Gay on the back; they roared with laughter over his simplicity; and he joined in the laughter, roaring loudest of all.

Few lived a life more placid and yet eventful in a small, still way, than Gay. From the counter-clerk bowing with obsequious grins across the till, to the companion, the intimate, the well-loved friend of great peers and great poets, was a mighty stretch which Gay could certainly never have achieved by his poetical powers only. He laughed himself into every one's

When Fame did o'er the spacious plain,  
 The lays she once had learn'd repeat ;  
 Or listen'd to the tuneful strain,  
 And wonder'd who could sing so sweet ;  
 'Twas thus : the Graces held the lyre,  
 Th' harmonious strain the muses strung,  
 The Loves and Smiles compos'd the choir,  
 And Gay transcrib'd what Phœbus sung.—*Dr. Garth.*

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heart ; his beaming countenance made a sunshine about him ; and in his absence his friends seemed to find that something of the gaiety, something of the brightness of life had been eclipsed. Swift, influenced by a presentiment of evil, which a few years before he would perhaps have sarcastically ridiculed as a human infirmity, not indeed so great as love, but as great perhaps as friendship, suffered the letter in which Pope told him of Gay's death to lie unopened for a week. The lamentation of Pope was sincere : "One of the nearest and longest ties I have ever had," he wrote, "is broken all on a sudden by the unfortunate death of poor Mr. Gay. An inflammatory fever carried him out of this life in three days. . . . Good God ! how often are we to die before we go quite off this stage ? In every friend we lose a part of ourselves, and the best part. God keep those we have left ! Few are worth praying for, and one's self the least of all." Of all Gay's friends, Pope had indeed been the most constant, the most gentle, the most eager and incessant in his efforts to promote his welfare. And of all Pope's epitaphs, the epitaph on Gay seems the only one which he wrote direct from the heart.

Yet strong as are the testimonies to Gay's power of exciting esteem, his character is hardly one for which much respect can be entertained. He had a great deal more of the woman about him than the man. He was absurdly helpless ; narrowly scanning for its opinion each face he encountered as he pressed forward ; gazing ruefully, almost tearfully about him when alone, like some nervous female in the mazes of London. He had no strength of mind ; no dignity of sentiment ; no power of helping himself. He was formed to lie on Turkey carpets, to repose on the laps of duchesses, to be daintily fed and perpetually caressed. His women friends made a whim of him, as they made a whim of Jocko the monkey, or the black footboy who followed them with their Prayer-book to church. His mind was soft, fat, flabby ; it was without muscle, or sinew, or sap. He agreed with everybody, always pleasantly smiling as he assented ; but assenting perhaps not so much from sycophancy or respect for the society that endured him, as from incapacity to oppose—as from emptiness of original ideas.

Gay's poetry is adorned by no unborrowed graces, and his comedies are weak in their construction, feeble in their wit, and without humour. His "Trivia" is indeed a clever, a lively, a valuable performance, abounding in graphic descriptions and serviceable as the best picture of the Metropolis, as it appeared in Gay's time, that has been handed down. But as a poem it is deformed by long and absurd digressions. He sets the agencies of a stale mythology to work to account for the existence of things so truly small

We owe to Gay the ballad opera, a mode of comedy which at first was supposed only to delight by its novelty, but has now, by the experience of half a century, been found so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgment or luck, the praise of wit must be given to the inventor ; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom such merits of originality cannot be attributed.—*Dr. Johnson.*

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and commonplace that they positively vulgarize the poetry in which they are found. Thus, he calls upon his muse not to forget "the patten's praise;" and his muse thus appealed to falls to labouring thus :—Patty, we are told in heroics, is the daughter of a goodly yeoman ; it is her business to milk the cows, which compels her so often as she sets out to "stroke the udder" to walk down a "miry lane." Vulcan, struck by her beauty and her innocence (which by the way he very soon corrupts) falls in love with her. Abandoning his "Paphian spouse," he descends from the celestial heights, possesses himself of a hut, and sets to work to forge a pair of pattens for Patty :

Here smokes his forge, he bares his sinewy arm,  
And early strokes the sounding anvil warm ;  
Around his shop the steely sparkles flew,  
As for the steed he shap'd the bending shoe.

Straying near, Patty watches him at his work ; the begrimed god solicits a kiss ; Patty coyly refuses, but after a little submits to his embraces. She then puts on the pattens :

Straight the new engine on the anvil glows,  
And the pale virgin on the patten rose.  
No more her lungs are shook with drooping rheums,  
And on her cheek reviving beauty blooms.  
The god obtained his suit; though flattery fail,  
Presents with female virtue must prevail :  
The patten now supports each frugal dame,  
Which from the blue-eyed Patty takes its name.

Let nonsense go further than this if it can. No less cumbrous, unnecessary, and absurd is the account of the origin which Gay contrives for the shoe-black, which he assigns to an amour between a goddess and a dustman. It is as the author of the "Beggars Opera" (which Byron called a St. Giles's lampoon) and the ballads of "Black-ey'd Susan" and "'Twas when the seas were roaring" that Gay is remembered. Than his ballads indeed nothing can be sweeter or simpler. In them he has broken through the conventional restraints of an age in which the Muse wore a full-bottomed wig and took snuff with the courtly urbanity of a Chesterfield ; and with his ear straining to catch the language of his heart, sings songs full of nature and sweetness. But here praise must end ; for in his "Rural Sports," the "Shepherd's Week," "The Fan," and the "Fables,"

The most good-natured and simple of mankind.—*Macaulay*.

The six pastorals called the "Shepherd's Week," and the burlesque poem of "Trivia," any man fond of lazy literature will find delightful at the present day, and must read from beginning to end with pleasure. They are to poetry what charming little Dresden china figures are to sculpture; graceful, minikin, fantastic; with a certain beauty always accompanying them. The pretty little personages of the pastorals, with gold clocks to their stockings, and fresh satin ribands to their crooks and waistcoats, and boddices, dance their loves to a minuet tune, played on a bird organ, approach the charmer, or rush from the false one daintily on their red-heeled tip-toes, and die of despair and rapture with the most pathetic little grins and ogles; or repose, simpering at each other, under an arbour of pea-green crockery.—*Thackeray*.

His Pastorals are about as bad as his "Beggar's Opera"—vulgar both—if vulgarity there ever were on earth, in town or country.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1833.

## Samuel Richardson.

1689-1761.

I loathe the cant which can recommend "Pamela" and "Clarissa Harlowe" as strictly moral, although they poison the imagination of the young with continued doses of *tinct. lythe*, while "Tom Jones" is prohibited as loose.—*Coleridge*.

Richardson could not be contented to sail quietly down the stream of reputation, without longing to taste the froth from every stroke of the oar.—*Johnson*.

Richardson had little conversation, except about his own works, of which Sir Joshua Reynolds said he was always willing to talk.—*Langton*.

Richardson is the first of our novelists who set the fashion of concentrating all the interest of human life upon the war between man and woman.—*Lord Lytton*.

Thought what fame was on reading in a case of murder that

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he exhibits himself as a poet who has failed even to master that tricky versification which makes the poems of Addison, of Phillips, of Fenton, Walsh, and Granville look as though they were all the compositions of one weak mind.—*Ed.*

"Mr. Wych, grocer at Tunbridge, sold some bacon, flour, cheese, and, it is believed some plums, to some gipsy women accused. He had on his counter (I quote faithfully) a book, the 'Life of Pamela,' which he was tearing for waste-paper, &c. In the cheese was found, &c., and a leaf of 'Pamela' wrapt around the bacon!" What would Richardson, the vainest and luckiest of *living* authors (*i.e.*, while alive)—he who, with Aaron, used to prophecy and chuckle over the presumed fall of Fielding (the prose Homer of human nature), and of Pope (the most beautiful of poets)—what would he have said, could he have traced his pages from their place on the French prince's toilets (see Boswell's "Johnson") to the grocer's counter and the gipsy murderer's bacon !!!—*Byron*.

Except by "*Clarissa Harlowe*," I was never so moved by a work of genius as by "*Othello*." I read seventeen hours a day at "*Clarissa*," and held the book so long up, leaning on my elbows in an arm-chair, that I stopped the circulation and could not move. When Lovelace writes, "Dear Belton, it is all over, and *Clarissa* lives," I got up in a fury, and wept like an infant, and cursed and d—d Lovelace till exhausted. This is the triumph of genius over the imagination and heart of its readers.—*B. R. Haydon*.

In my youth "*Clarissa*" and "*Sir Charles Grandison*" were the reigning entertainment. Whatever objections may be made to them in certain respects, they contain more maxims of virtue and sound moral principle than half the books called moral. A large volume of valuable aphorisms has been collected from them, abounding in practical lessons for the conduct.—*Hannah More*.

Clearness of sight we may call the foundation of all talent; for, in fact, unless we see our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it in our understanding, our imagination, or our affections; yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence, but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest or with ordinary powers. Homer surpasses all men in this quality; but, strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs in truth to what is called a lively mind, and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases mentioned it is combined with great garrulity: their descriptions are detailed, ample, and tediously exact. Homer's fire bursts through from time to time as by accident;



but Defoe and Richardson have no fire, only a clear insight into the goings on of nature.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

Blest be the shade of Richardson, who bequeathed to us the divine "Clarissa," shining through sufferings, glorious in her fall, and almost visible in her ascent to the regions of immortality. Matchless creation of the only mind that ever conceived and drew truly a Christian heroine. With all her sex's softness, loveliness, and grace, and all the self-devotion, undeviating rectitude, and lively faith of the primitive martyrs! What are his numerous blemishes but dust in the balance when compared to his endless beauties? But then his faults are obvious to every common mind, and no common mind takes in his merits.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

Fielding couldn't do otherwise than laugh at the puny, cockney bookseller pouring out endless volumes of sentimental twaddle, and hold him up to scorn as a moll-coddle and a milksop. His genius had been nursed on sack-posset, and not on dishes of tea. His muse had sung the loudest in tavern choruses, had seen the daylight streaming in over thousands of emptied bowls, and reeled home to chambers on the shoulders of the watchmen. Richardson's goddess was attended by old maids and dowagers, and fed on muffins and bohea. "Milksop!" roars Harry Fielding, clattering at the timid shop-shutters. "Wretch! Monster! Mohock!" shrieks the sentimental author of "Pamela;" and all the ladies of his court cackle out an affrighted chorus.—*Thackeray.*<sup>1</sup>

## Charles Macklin.<sup>2</sup>

1690-1797.

Macklin, who largely deals in half-form'd sounds,  
Who wantonly transgresses nature's bounds,

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<sup>1</sup> This may be very droll, but it is not criticism. Miss Charlotte Brontë very properly banned the whole lecture on Fielding. "That Thackeray was wrong in his way of treating Fielding's character and vices, my conscience told me." After reading that letter, I trebly felt that he was wrong. Had Thackeray owned a son, grown or growing up, and a son brilliant but reckless, would he have spoken in that light way of courses that lead to disgrace and the grave?"

<sup>2</sup> Charles Macklin is best known by his "Man of the World," a comedy which is second only to the "School for Scandal" and "She Stoops to

Whose acting's hard, affected, and constrained,  
Whose features, as each other they disdained,  
At variance set, inflexible and coarse,  
Ne'er know the workings of united force,  
Ne'er kindly soften to each other's aid,  
Nor show the mingled power of light and shade ;  
No longer for a thankless stage concern'd,  
To worthier thoughts his mighty genius turn'd,  
Harangu'd, gave lectures, made each sample elf  
Almost as good a speaker as himself.—*Churchill.*

His mind was as rough and durable as his body. His aspect and address confounded his inferiors ; and his delight in making others fear and admire him gave him an aversion to those who were his superiors.—*Thomas Holcroft.*

He was a most striking and remarkable character, and one that stands out very distinctly during the long course of his whole career, which stretched over nearly ninety years. He was quarrelsome, overbearing, even savage ; always in either revolt or conflict, full of genius, and a spirit that carried him through a hundred misfortunes.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

At this time Charles Mathews sought an interview with the celebrated Charles Macklin, who had then attained a hundred years and upwards. He had been recommended to recite to him for the purpose of gaining the veteran's opinion and instructions ; and going by appointment to the residence of the aged man in Tavistock Row, he found him ready to receive him. There was Macklin in his arm-chair ; and when the door opened and the youth was announced, he did not attempt to rise, nor, indeed, take any notice of the entrance of the stranger, but remained with an arm on either elbow of the chair he sat in, looking sour and severe at his expected pupil, who, hesitating on the threshold, paused timidly, nay fearfully, which occasioned the centenary to call out in any but inviting tones, "Come *nearer* ! What do you stand *there* for ? You can't act in the gap of the door." The young man approached. "Well," added Macklin, in a tone ill-calculated to inspire confidence, "now let me hear you. Don't be *afraid* !" His crabbed austerity completely chilled the

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Conquer." His long life may be said to have been the history of the drama of the eighteenth century.—*Ed.*

aspirant's ardour; however, mustering up all the confidence this harsh reception had left him, he began to declaim according to the approved rule of "speech days." Macklin, sitting like a stern judge waiting to pronounce sentence upon a criminal, rather than to laud a hero, soon interrupted the speech with a mock-imitation of the novice's monotonous tones, barking out, "Bow, wow, wow, wow!" This was enough to damp the Thespian flame which had lighted the poor youth into the presence of the terrible old man, and he felt himself unable to make another essay, but stood, with downcast eyes and swelling heart, awaiting the verdict which he expected. At last Macklin, with increasing severity of manner and voice, asked, "Young man, are you at all aware what the qualifications of an actor should be?" The youth sighed out, "I believe not, sir." Macklin: "No, I am sure you do not. I will tell you then, sir. I will tell you what he ought to be; what *I* was; and what no man was ever eminent without being. In the first place, an actor ought to possess a fine, an expressive eye, 'an eye like Mars to threaten and command.'" (His own flatly contradicted his assertion.) "Sir, he should have a beautiful countenance. He should be able to assume a look that might appal the devil." (Here indeed he had one requisite in full force.) "He should possess a fine, clear, mellifluous voice!" (Alas! his own sounded like a cracked trumpet.) "A graceful figure, sir." (The lean and slippered pantaloons was an Apollo Belvidere to Macklin.) "But above all, young man—above all—an actor—should—possess—that—first—great—natural—requisite—that—test—of—genius—a good—a good—*Sir*," added he, in a loud and angry voice, as if commanding assistance, "I want a *word*!—he should, I say, possess a good retentive—" "Memory," cried out the young man. "Ay, sir, memory."—*Memoirs of Charles Mathews.*"

Macklin was the first natural Shylock—

"The Jew  
That Shakspeare drew."<sup>1</sup>—*"Life of Reynolds."*

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<sup>1</sup> This distich was written by Pope on Macklin's "Othello."—**ED.**

# • Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

1690-1762.

Since our country has been honour'd with the glory of your wit, as elevated and immortal as your soul, it no longer remains a doubt whether your sex have a strength of mind in proportion to their sweetness. There is something in your verses as distinguish'd as your air. They are as strong as truth, as deep as reason, as clear as innocence, and as smooth as beauty. They contain a peculiar and nameless mixture of force and grace, which is at once so movingly serene and so majestically lovely, that it is too amiable to appear anywhere but in your eyes and in your writings.—*Savage*.<sup>1</sup>

Though Artemisia talks by fits  
Of councils, classics, fathers, wits,  
Reads Malebranche, Boyle, and Locke :  
Yet in some things methinks she fails,—  
'Twere well if she would pare her nails  
And wear a cleaner smock.—*Pope*.

But if the first Eve  
Hard doom did receive,  
When only one apple had she,  
What punishment new  
Shall be found out for you  
Who tasting has robbed the whole tree?—*Ibid*.

She was an extraordinary woman ; she could translate *Epictetus*, and yet write a song worthy of Aristippus. The lines—

And when the long hours of the public are past,  
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,  
May every fond moment that pleasure endear !  
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear ! &c.

There, Mr. Bowles !—what say you to such a supper with such a woman ? and her own description too ? Is not her “ champagne and chicken ” worth a forest or two ? Is it not

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere Savage sings :—

Thus in the dame each nobler grace we find,  
Fair Wortley's angel accent, eyes, and mind.—*The Wanderer*.

poetry? It appears to me that this stanza contains the "*purée*" of the whole philosophy of Epicurus. . . . After all, would not some of us have been as great fools as Pope? For my part, I wonder that with his quick feelings, her coquetry, and his disappointment, he did no more—instead of writing some lines which are to be condemned, if false, and regretted, if true.—*Byron*.

With regard to the indelicacy of Lady Mary's letters, no thinking person can exonerate her from having had a corrupted mind, whatever her conduct may or may not have been. Neither do we accept the late Lord Wharncliffe's excuse, that it was in accordance with the feeling of the times that Lady Mary indulged in *double entendre*, and in expressions neither to be written nor uttered by modest women.—*Grace Wharton*.

The glory of her own sex, and the wonder of ours.—*Fielding*.

Did I tell you Lady Mary Wortley is here? She laughs at my Lady Walpole, scolds my Lady Pomfret, and is laughed at by the whole town. Her dress, her avarice and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob that does not cover her greasy black locks that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old mazarine blue wrapper that gapes open, and discovers a canvass petticoat. Her face swelled violently on one side, her . . . partly covered with a plaster and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse that you would not use it to wash a chimney.—*Horace Walpole*.

Lady Mary is one of the most shining characters in the world, but shines like a comet. She is all irregularity, and always wandering; the most wise, the most imprudent; loveliest, most disagreeable; best-natured, cruelest woman in the world, "all things by turns, but nothing long."—*Spence*.

Thy poems are little, being but a little wit in rhyme, *vers de société*; but thy prose is much—admirable, better than acute, idiomatical, off-hand, conversational without inelegance, fresh as the laugh on the young cheek, and full of brain.—*Leigh Hunt*.

## Bishop Butler.

\* 1692–1752.

The Bishop of Durham (Chandler), another great writer of controversy, is dead too, immensely rich; he is succeeded by

Butler of Bristol, a metaphysic author, much patronized by the late Queen: she never could make my father read his book, and which she certainly did not understand herself.—*Horace Walpole*.

Wilberforce requested Pitt to read Butler's "Analogy." Pitt did so; and was by no means satisfied with the reasoning in it. "My dear Wilberforce," he said, "you may prove anything by analogy."—*Rogers' "Table Talk."*

To his sermons we are indebted for the complete overthrow of the selfish system, and to his "Analogy" for the most noble and surprising defence of revealed religion, perhaps, which has ever yet been made of any system whatever.—*Sydney Smith*.

That there is such a thing as a *course of nature* none can deny. This, therefore, is the ground on which Butler takes his stand, whereon he fixes a lever that shakes the strongholds of unbelief even to their foundations; for on comparing this scheme of nature with the scheme of revelation there is found a most singular correspondence between their several parts,—such a correspondence as gives very strong reason to believe that the author of one is the author of both. The argument, indeed, does not amount to proof, but to presumption. It is as though the parentage of a foundling were to be made the subject of inquiry: now that it is the child of such or such a parent—of the one or other of the two women, for instance, that strove before Solomon—can indeed only be *made out* effectually by the production of certain matters of fact, in evidence; but at the same time, if it manifestly resembles a certain son of a parent in question—'one face, one voice, one habit, and two persons'—this circumstance, though it would not of itself *prove* the point in dispute, would very greatly corroborate the proofs derived from other and independent sources, and would overcome many scruples which might otherwise arise in the mind of judge or jury, as to any supposed deficiency in the proofs themselves. Such is the value of the argument from analogy.—*Quarterly Review*, 1830.

### "Orator" Henley.

1692-1756.

As quacks the lying puff the papers fill,  
Or hand their own praise in a pocky bill,

Where empty boasts of much superior sense  
 Draw from the cheated crowd their idle pence,  
 So the great Henley hires for half-a-crown  
 A quack advertisement to tell the town  
 Of some strange point to be disputed on ;  
 Where all who love the science of debate  
 May hear themselves or other coxcombs prate.

*Dodsley.*<sup>1</sup>

He edited a paper of nonsense called the "Hip Doctor," and once attracted to his oratory an audience of shoemakers by announcing that he would teach a new and short way of making shoes ; his way being to cut off the tops of boots.—*Professor Morley.*

John Henley, a native of Leicestershire, had graduated at Cambridge, but filled, as it would appear, with overweening vanity and assurance, he defied the authority of the Established Church, and not only set up a new religious scheme, which he called Primitive Christianity, but, with a mere smattering of knowledge, undertook to teach and lecture upon all sciences, all languages, and in fact, all subjects whatever, on which, to judge from all accounts, he must have talked a great deal of unintelligible rigmarole. On the 14th of May, 1726, Henley first advertised his scheme in the public newspapers, and on the 10th of July, having taken a licence from a magistrate to deliver public lectures, he established what he called his "Oratory" in a sort of wooden booth, built over the shambles in Newport-market.—*Wright.*

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Dodsley (born 1703), from being a footman became not only an opulent and eminent bookseller, but a respectable poet. He was for some time footman to one Dartineuf, a man known to his age as a voluptuary and a friend of Pope. "When Lord Lyttleton's 'Dialogues of the Dead' came out," said Johnson, "one of which is between Apicius, an ancient epicure, and Dartineuf, a modern epicure, Dodsley said to me, 'I knew Dartineuf well, for I was his footman.'" The fact of his having been a servant procured for him from Curll the nickname of "The Livery Muse," a title which has steadily adhered. Anderson has written his life in his "British Poets." "He was," says he, "a generous friend, an encourager of men of genius, and acquired the esteem and respect of all who knew him. It was his happiness to pass the greatest part of his life in an intimacy with men of the brightest abilities, whose names will be revered by posterity ; by most of whom he was loved as much for the virtues of his heart, as he was admired on account of his writings." He died 1764.—ED.

Infbrownd with native bronze, lo ! Henley stands,  
Tuning his voice and balancing his hands.  
How fluent nonsense trickles from his tongue !  
How sweet the periods neither said nor sung !—*Pope.*

In the "Oratory Transactions" of that eccentric character, John Henley, better known by the appellation of "Orator Henley," he tells us, that on his first coming to London he preached more charity sermons about town, was more numerous followed, and raised more for the poor than any other preacher, however dignified or distinguished. One of his special merits, according to his own account, consisted in his being the first to introduce regular action into the pulpit ; but this probably deserves to be ranked with the many other things peculiar to Orator Henley, "which no mortal ever thought of." His popularity and the novelty of his style were the true causes, he says, "why some obstructed his rising in town, from envy, jealousy, and a disrelish of those who are not qualified to be complete spaniels. For there was no objection to his being tossed into a country benefice by the way of the sea, as far as Galilee of the gentiles (like a pendulum swinging one way as far as the other)." Not being able to obtain preferment in the Church, he struck out the plan of his lectures or orations, discoursing on Sundays on theological matters, and on the Wednesdays on all other sciences.—"*Percy Anecdotes.*"

## Lord Chesterfield.

1694-1773.

It is by his "Letters" that Chesterfield's character as an author must stand or fall. Viewed as compositions, they appear almost unrivalled as models for a serious epistolary style ; clear, elegant, and terse, never straining at effect, and yet never hurried into carelessness. While constantly urging the same topics, so great is their variety of argument and illustration,

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<sup>1</sup> A brief specimen of Henley's jargon is quoted or burlesqued by Smart in his notes to the "Hilliad :"—"There is more music in a peal of marrow-bones and cleavers than in these verses. I am a logician on fundamentals, a rationalist lover of mankind, Glastonberry thorn—huzza, boys !—wit, a vivacious command of all objects and ideas. I am the only wit in Great Britain," &c. &c.—ED.



that in some sense they appear always different, in another sense always the same. They have, however, incurred strong reprehension on two separate grounds : first, because some of their maxims are repugnant to good morals ; and, secondly, as insisting too much on manners and graces, instead of more solid acquirements. On the first charge I have no defence to offer ; but the second is certainly erroneous, and arises only from the idea and expectation of finding a general system of education in letters that were intended solely for the improvement of one man. Young Stanhope was sufficiently inclined to study, and imbued with knowledge ; the difficulty lay in his awkward address and indifference to pleasing. It is against these faults, therefore, and these faults only, that Chesterfield points his battery of eloquence.<sup>1</sup>—*Lord Mahon.*

Lord Chesterfield's eloquence, the fruit of much study, was less characterized by force and compass than by elegance and perspicuity, and especially by good taste and urbanity, and a vein of delicate irony which, while it sometimes inflicted severe strokes, never passed the limits of decency and propriety. It was that of a man, who in the union of wit and good sense with politeness, had not a competitor.—*Ibid.*

He had early in his life announced his claim to wit, and the women believed in it. He had besides given himself out as a man of great intrigue, with as slender pretensions ; yet the women believed in that too—one should have thought that they had been more competent judges of merit in that particular ! It was not his fault if he had not wit ; nobody exceeded his efforts in that point ; and though they were far from producing the wit, they at least amply yielded the applause he aimed at. He was so accustomed to see people

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<sup>1</sup> How far these letters benefited the person for whom they were designed, is told in the following stanzas :—

Vile Stanhope—Demons blush to tell—  
 In twice two hundred places  
 Has shown his son the road to hell,  
 Escorted by the Graces ;  
 But little did th' ungenerous lad  
 Concern himself about them ;  
 For base, degenerate, meanly bad,  
 He sneaked to hell without them.

Mr. Philip Stanhope's character has been championed by Boswell ("Life of Johnson").—*Ed.*

laugh at the most trifling thing he said, that he would be disappointed at finding nobody smile before they knew what he was going to say. His speeches were fine, but as much beloved as his extempore sayings. His writings were—everybody's; that is, whatever came out good was given to him, and he was too humble ever to refuse the gift.—*Horace Walpole*.

This man, I thought, had been a lord among wits; but I find he is only a wit among lords.—*Johnson*.

(His "Letters") teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing-master.—*Ibid*.

He was allowed by everybody to have more conversable entertaining table-wit than any man of his time; his propensity to ridicule in which he indulged himself with infinite humour and no distinction; and his inexhaustible spirits and no discretion, made him sought and feared—liked and not loved—by most of his acquaintance.—*Lord Hervey*.<sup>1</sup>

When I talked my best I quoted Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the classics contained everything that was either necessary, useful, or ornamental to men; and I was not even without thoughts of wearing the toga virilis of the Romans, instead of the vulgar and illiberal dress of the moderns.—*Chesterfield*.

Chesterfield is a little tea-table scoundrel, that tells little womanish lies to make quarrels in families; and tries to make women lose their reputation and make their husbands beat

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hervey has given the following description of this witty Earl:—"With a person as disagreeable as it was possible for a human figure to be without being deformed, he affected following many women of the first beauty and the most in fashion. He was very short, disproportioned, thick, and clumsily made: had a broad rough-featured ugly face, with black teeth, and a head big enough for a Polyphemus. One Ben Ashurst, who said a few good things, though admired for many, told Lord Chesterfield once that he was like a stunted giant—which was a humorous idea and really apposite." The harsh opinion I have quoted from Johnson cannot be accepted as the Doctor's real sentiments; for elsewhere Boswell reports Johnson to have said, speaking of Chesterfield: "His manner was exquisitely elegant, and he had more knowledge than I expected." Boswell: "Did you find, sir, his conversation to be of a superior sort?" Johnson: "Sir, in the conversation which I had with him, I had the best right to superiority, for it was upon philology and literature."—*ED*.

them, without any object but to give himself airs ; as if anybody could believe a woman could like such a dwarf-baboon.—*George II.*

Lord Chesterfield was tinsel.—*Boswell.*

The name of Chesterfield has become a synonym for good breeding and politeness ; it is associated in our minds with all that is graceful in manner and cold in heart, attractive in appearance and unamiable in reality. The image it calls up is that of a man rather below the middle height, in a court suit and blue riband, with regular features wearing an habitual expression of gentlemanlike ease. His address is insinuating, his bow perfect, his compliments rival those of *Le Grand Monarque* in delicacy : laughter is too demonstrative for him, but the smile of courtesy is ever on his lip ; and by the time he has gone through the circle, the great object of his daily ambition is accomplished—all the women are already half in love with him, and every man is desirous to be his friend. But the name recalls little or nothing of the orator, the statesman, the wit. We forget that this same little man was one of the best Lord Lieutenants Ireland ever knew, the best speaker in the House of Lords till Pitt and Murray entered it, one of our most graceful essayists, and the wittiest man of quality of his time.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1845.

## Richard Savage.

1697–1743.

An earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribands in St. James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds weight of iron on his legs, in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden in warm weather, and in

cold weather as near as he could get to the furnace of a glass-house. Yet in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the Leaders of Opposition without the mark of patriotism, and had heard the Prime Minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent.—*Macaulay*.

His character was marked by profligacy, insolence, and ingratitude.—*Boswell*.

Ill-fated Savage, at whose birth was given  
No parents but the Muse, no friend but heaven.

*R. B. Sheridan.*

The inhumanity of his mother had given him a right to find every good man his father.—*Steele*.

Though he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critics, it must, however, be acknowledged that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air which has no resemblance of any foregoing writer, that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with success, because what was nature in Savage would in another be affectation.—*Johnson*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The "Life of Savage," by Dr. Johnson, was a great favourite with our forefathers. Its sturdy though obvious morality pleased them mightily; they lived near enough to the scenes which it described to feel a lively interest in what they read; and the queer species, of which Savage was the type, still flourished. The name of Richard Savage was popular. Romantic misses had shed such tears as the novels of Eliza Heywood were calculated to draw over the story of his trials, his mother's desertion, his efforts to soften her inhumanity. Husbands had looked sternly at their wives as they recounted the frailty of the Countess of Macclesfield. Wives had sneered with the Sir Plumes and the Sir Foplings whom they went to meet in their chairs over the clumsy contrivance of the mask, the shoemaker, and the tender-hearted foster-mother. The poetry of Savage was still current. By some "The Wanderer" was preferred to "Paradise Lost," which they had read only in the quotations in the *Spectator*. Others thought it not inferior to the "Seasons" of Thomson or the "Creation" of Blackmore, which was still looked into for its piety. Passages from the "Bastard" were quoted to point and illustrate Grub Street morals in Grub Street magazines; and by the enemies of Cibber the poems of the "Volunteer-Laureate" were spouted at the coffee-houses as compositions eminently

Mr. Richard Savage, an author whose manufactures had long lain uncalled for in the warehouse, till he happened, very fortunately for his bookseller, to be found guilty of a capital crime at the Old Bailey. The merchant instantly took the hint, and the very next day advertised the works of Mr. Savage, now under sentence of death for murder. This device succeeded, and immediately (to use their phrase) carried off the whole impression.—*Fielding.*

Savage, how sordidly vicious, and the more condemned for

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meriting the salary and the wreath. But his celebrity was kept alive more by his foes than by his friends. They repeated the anecdotes of his ingratitude; they made epigrams upon him as a murderer of whom death had unfairly robbed the gallows. By degrees, however, his name became neglected; and his romantic story had almost faded off the public tongue when a letter to Mr. Urban, of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, announced that a life of Mr. Richard Savage would speedily be published by "a person who was favoured with his confidence, and who had received from himself an account of most of the transactions which he proposes to mention." This life we can hardly now read with patience. We soon grow weary of the pompous periods of this solemn biography, clad, according to the custom of the time, in a full-bottomed peruke. Yet nothing less stately and galleon-like would have found much favour in the eyes of that generation of men, stiffly brocaded with the manners which had been imported from Versailles by young persons of quality who had performed the grand tour. Who reads this memoir now, reads it, I should say, not for its "diction," nor for its morality, nor for any interest he may take in its queer hero, but for its value as a very respectable picture of eighteenth-century manners. As we glance over its pages, the present grows dim, and the past shines out like a phantasmagoria. Fleet Street is once more full of citizens in stockings, plate buttons, and shovel hats. Pert apprentices at shop doors stand ogling the trim, bare-bosomed miss that trips with mincing gait along the rudely-flagged pavement. Running footmen, in a glory of colour and gold, make a halo about the coroneted gilt coach that clatters past, bearing some titled fair, whose name will be found carved with diamonds on many a toasting-cup, to the drawing-room or the Mall. Islington and Bayswater are green fields, intersected with hedges and shadowed with trees, among which people dressed like Dresden china figures strut and labour, chatter and make love. There is a procession journeying along Holborn Hill to Tyburn, of which the chief attraction is undoubtedly a cart containing an ordinary and a malefactor, the ordinary depressed, the malefactor in high spirits. At intervals men, demure and sleek-looking, pass with baskets on their heads, from which small boys pluck the wigs from the heads of unwary passengers, who very naturally charge every man but the right one with the theft. Beaux are numerous; skipping along in the fine comedy style; a confusion of periwig, ruffles, flat faces, and thin legs. As the night descends the west end of the town grows pale in an eruption of flambeaux; the east with link-boys' torches. The flambeaux break out in smoky flames about the mansions of the great, about the entrances of the theatres, about the doors of the clubs and the chocolate houses. Now the coffee-house is

the pains that are taken to palliate his vices ! Offensive as they appear through a veil, how would they disgust without one !—*Cowper.*

Did you ever read Savage's beautiful poem of "The Wanderer?" If not, do so, and you will see the fault which I think attaches to Lord Maxell—a want of distinct precision and intelligibility about the story, which counteracts, especially with ordinary readers, the effect of beautiful and forcible diction, poetical imagery, and animated description.—*Scott, to Allan Cunningham.*

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beginning to fill with well-shaved men, who soon sit dawdling over dishes of tea, or get thick voices over large tumblers of strong waters. The air grows hot and heavy with the murmur of voices and the smell of strong Virginia. Some tell how my lady was stopped in her post-chaise on her way from Bath by the same highwayman who the week before had rifled my lord of seventy-two pieces. Others discuss with feigned contempt and obvious relish the most equivocal passages in Mr. Henley's discourse last night. Others narrate how when Mr. Pope appeared at Drury Lane on Tuesday the whole pit applauded him, which was the occasion of Mr. Curl's *bon-mot* to Mr. Ralph. There is the typical Irish Captain, the swaggering bully of the epoch, with tarnished lace dropping from his hat, and ruffles stained with Burgundy, for which the score is still unpaid, whose breath fills a wide circumference with the aroma of undigested sack-posset, boasting in a loud tone of the little milliner who is so jealous that she follows him to all the masquerades dressed like a boy. You are to stop his vitals, or roast his gizzard, if he can tell how the little milliner knows his whereabouts so accurately ; but that may be as it is—and here he winks in so comical a manner that the decent, sober-looking curate in the corner, who sits smoking a long pipe, and listening with suppressed enjoyment to the captain's carnal disclosures, is ready to split his sides with laughing. Yonder a hollow-eyed, thin man, with a hook nose, black teeth, and a brown periuke, is reading a fat manuscript poem to a solemn personage in a faded scarlet waistcoat, who cannot hear for the hubbub about him, but who nods each time he removes his pipe, and with happy ambiguity of meaning vows that he is now reminded of Mr. Prior and now of Mr. Gay. All at once there is an uproar in the street ; there are shrill yells for the watch, a torch flares upon a crowd of pale but not disquieted faces ; a form lies quite still with his head in the kennel, and a dozen hands are turning and twisting a man who has lost his wig and tries to use his sword. But in the coffee-house the scene is unchanged : the captain still recites, the curate still pretends not to hear ; the poet is perhaps a little more fervid, his hearer perhaps a little more sleepy. Presently the drawer says that a tradesman of Cheapside has been killed by a drunken beau whom he had harassed by duns. There are no exclamations of wonder ; the captain perhaps turns a little pale ; the curate civilly asks for another dish of tea, and the hubbub swells more loudly.—*E ?*

## William Hogarth.

1697-1764.

Other pictures we look at; his prints we read.—*Charles Lamb.*

Everything in his pictures has life and motion in it. Not only does the business of the scene never stand still, but every feature and muscle is put into full play; the exact feeling of the moment is brought out and carried to its utmost height, and then instantly seized and stamped on the canvas for ever.

—*Hazlitt.*

Hogarth: "That fellow Freke is always shooting his bolt absurdly one way or another. Handel is a giant in music; Greene only a light Florimel kind of a composer."—"Ay," says our artist's informant, "but at the same time Mr. Freke declared you were as good a portrait painter as Vandyck."—"There he was right," adds Hogarth, "and so, by G—! I am, give me my time and let me choose my subject."—*Works.*

The hand of him here torpid lies  
That drew th' essential forms of grace,  
Here closed in death th' attentive eyes  
That saw the manners in the face.—*Johnson.*

This I may safely assert, that I have done my best to make those about me tolerably happy, and my greatest enemy cannot say I ever did an intentional injury.—*Hogarth.*

I cannot but consider Reynolds superior to Hogarth as a painter, though certainly not as a poet. In the originality of his genius Hogarth is not only before Reynolds, but it would be difficult to name the painter of any age or country who is before Hogarth.—*C. R. Leslie.*

No man was ever less of a hero; you see him before you and can fancy what he was—a jovial, honest London citizen, stout and sturdy; a hearty plain-spoken man, loving his laugh, his friends, his glass, his roast beef of old England, and having a proper bourgeois scorn for French frogs, for mounseers, and wooden shoes in general, for foreign fiddlers, foreign singers, and above all, for foreign painters, whom he held in the most amusing contempt.—*Thackeray.*

I do not think it quite justice to say that Hogarth was a great comic genius. It is more true that he was a great master of the tragedy and comedy of low life. His pictures have terrific and pathetic circumstances and even scenes: he was a Lillo as well as a Fielding. His sphere, which was English low life, was contracted indeed, compared to that of Shakspeare, who ranged through human nature in all times, countries, ranks, and forms; but he resembled Shakspeare in the versatility of talent, which could be either tragic or comic.—*Sir James Mackintosh.*

Hogarth rose with Richardson and Fielding. The "Rake's Progress" is a novel on canvas. The Dutch painters had before painted familiar and low scenes, but they were without any particular moral tendency; and it was scenery rather than the history of ordinary life which they represented. They were masters of the mechanism of their art in which Hogarth was totally deficient. Hogarth had extraordinary vigour of sense and a quick perception of the ridiculous with somewhat of that coarseness and prejudice against sensibility and refinement which men of that character are apt to entertain. Horace Walpole brought him to dine with Gray, and complained that he was seated between tragedy and comedy. They did not talk to each other; which he ought to have foreseen. Gray must have shrunk from Hogarth and Hogarth must have laughed at Gray. Hogarth and Johnson suited each other better.—*Ibid.*

A keen and exquisite perception of whatever is ludicrous or defective is rarely, *most rarely* united with a lofty or poetical sensibility for elegance and beauty; and Hogarth's mind, essentially comic and familiar with awkwardness and affectation in all their varying shapes, could only conceive beauty through the cold medium of a false and narrow theory, for such it is, however ingeniously developed, in his "Analysis of Beauty." Whatever may be said in praise of waving lines and graduated tints—if these are its essential constituents, the Quadrant is more beautiful than the Parthenon, and the Flemish dames of Rubens are more beautiful than the angels of Raphael or the goddesses of Praxiteles. The conclusion is inevitable, for those who palliated its absurdity by advocating the introduction of Contrasts or Utility, in fact give up the principle and only show that they feel the inevitable necessity of resorting to a different standard. Such plausible generalities



have misled men more accustomed to disentangle sophistry than Hogarth.—*Quarterly Review*.

After this admirable artist had spent the greater part of his life in an active, busy, and we may add successful attention to the ridicule of life; after he had invented a new species of dramatic painting, in which probably he will never be equalled, and had stored his mind with infinite materials to explain and illustrate the domestic and familiar scenes of common life, which were generally and ought to have been always the subject of his pencil; he very imprudently, or rather presumptuously, attempted the great historical style. . . . It is to be regretted that any part of the life of such a genius should be fruitlessly employed.—*Sir J. Reynolds, "Discourses."*

### Bishop Warburton.

1698–1779.

He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited inquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination nor clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him an haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause.—*Dr. Johnson*.

I cannot admit the claim of Warburton to be considered as a great scholar. He had read widely indeed; but he had no accurate knowledge of Greek, and not the smallest taste for the finer delicacies of either of the classical languages. His attempt to answer Bentley on the question about Zaleucus' laws would have disgraced the Christchurch confederacy. His theory about the sixth book of Virgil is fit only to be laughed at. He scarcely ever translates a passage from the Greek without some mistake which really affects the meaning. And, though he quotes from a vast range of authors, I cannot help suspecting that he generally quotes at second hand.—*Macaulay*.

Had the author of the "Divine Legation of Moses" more skilfully appropriated his coarse eloquence of abuse, his customary assurances of the idiotcy, both in head and heart, of all his opponents; if he had employed those vigorous arguments of his own vehement humour in the defence of truth acknowledged and revered by learned men in general; or if he had confined them to the names of Chubb, Woolston, and other precursors of Mr. Thomas Paine; we should perhaps still characterize his mode of controversy by its rude violence, but not so often have heard his name used, even by those who have never read his writings, as a proverbial expression of learned arrogance.—*Coleridge*.

There are at Lord Bathurst's a good many unpublished letters of Pope, Bolingbroke, &c., which I have turned over. In one of them Bolingbroke says that he has no desire to "wrestle with a chimney-sweep," that is, Warburton.—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

Whatever extravagancies the prolific genius of Warburton may have led him into, amidst all his refinements, and discoveries, and paradoxes, the *great principles* of the Gospel, as they were held and taught by the Reformers, he never lost sight of (however he might not be true to some of inferior importance), and any departure from those principles no man was more quick to observe or more anxious to reprobate.—*Quarterly Review*, 1829.

The learned and dogmatic Warburton, who with the authority of a theologian, prescribes the motives and conduct of the Supreme Being.—*Gibbon*.

Why, when he gets to heaven, he will be seen mounted on the tallest horse there, and calling out to Paul, "Hold my stirrup," and to Peter, "Bring my whip."—*Cradock*.<sup>1</sup>

He was so proud, that should he meet  
The twelve Apostles in the street,  
He'd turn his nose up at them all,  
And shove his Saviour from the wall.—*Churchill*.

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<sup>1</sup> Cradock explains to us how "the Bishop obtained so many low anecdotes; for his conversation as well as some of his letters were at times complete comedy." "When tired with controversy," says he, "Warburton would send to the circulating libraries for basketfuls of all the trash of the town, and would laugh by the hour at the absurdities he glanced at."—*Ed.*

Warburton had that eagle-eyed sagacity which pierces through all difficulties and obscurities, and that glow of imagination which gilds and irradiates every object it touches.—*Bishop Hurd.*

## David Mallet.

1700—1765.

Next Mallet came, Mallet who knows each art  
The ear to tickle and to soothe the heart :  
Who with a goose-quill like a magic rod  
Transforms a Scottish peer into a god.—*Shaw.*

A Scotchman of no literary fame, and of infamous character.—*Macaulay.*

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation, so as to be no longer distinguished as a Scot, he seems inclined to disencumber himself from all adherence to his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch *Malloch* to English *Mallet*, without any imaginable reason or preference which the eye or ear can discover. What other proofs he gave of disrespect to his native country, I know not ; but it was remarked of him that he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend.—*Johnson.*<sup>1</sup>

His literary reputation was dead long before his natural death.—*Goldsmith.*

Mallet, in his "Life of Bacon," has forgotten that he was a philosopher ; and if he should write the Life of the Duke of Marlborough, which he had undertaken to do,<sup>2</sup> he would probably forget that he was a general.—*Warburton.*

<sup>1</sup> "Of the late Mr. Mallet he (Johnson) spoke with no great respect : said he was ready for any dirty job : that he had wrote against Byng at the instigation of the Ministry, and was equally ready to write for him, provided he found his account in it."—*Dr. Maxwell.*

<sup>2</sup> The portion of the Duchess of Marlborough's will relating to Mallet is as follows :—"I desire that Mr. Glover and Mr. Mallet, who are to write the history of the Duke of Marlborough, may have the use of all papers and letters relating to the same, found in any of my houses. And I desire that these two gentlemen may write the said history, that it may be made public to the world, how truly the late Duke of Marlborough wished that justice should be done to all mankind, who, I am sure, left King James with great regret, at a time when 'twas with hazard to himself ; and if he

He was a great free-thinker, and a very free speaker of his free thoughts; he made no scruple to disseminate his sceptical opinions whenever he could with any propriety introduce them. At his own table, indeed, the lady of the house (who was a staunch advocate for her husband's opinions) would often in the warmth of argument say, *Sir, we deists*. She once made use of this expression in a mixed company to David Hume, who refused the intended compliment by asserting that he was a very good Christian; for the truth of which he appealed to a worthy clergyman present, and this occasioned a laugh, which a little disconcerted the lady and Mr. Mallet. The lecture upon the *non credenda* of the free-thinkers was repeated so often, and urged with so much earnestness, that the inferior domestics became soon as able disputants as the heads of the family. The fellow who waited at table, being thoroughly convinced that for any of his misdeeds he should have no after-account to make, was resolved to profit by the doctrine, and made off with many things of value, particularly plate. Luckily he was so closely pursued that he was brought back with his prey to his master's house, who examined him before some select friends. At first the man was sullen, and would answer no questions put to him; but being urged to give a reason for his infamous behaviour, he resolutely said, "Sir, I had heard you so often talk of the impossibility of a future state, and that after death there was no reward for virtue, or punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery." "Well but, you rascal," replied Mallet, "had you no fear of the gallows?" "Sir," said the fellow, looking sternly at his master, "what is that to you if I had a mind to venture that? You had removed my greatest terror; why should I fear the lesser?"<sup>1</sup>—*Thomas Davies*.

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had been like the patriots of the present times, he might have been all that an ambitious man might hope for, by assisting King James to settle Popery in England. . . I give to Mr. Glover and to Mr. Mallet 500*l.* each for writing the said history."—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, in his "Memoirs," speaks of having been carried to Putney, "to the house of Mr. Mallet, by whose philosophy I was rather scandalized than reclaimed." This from Gibbon!—ED.

## James Thomson.

1700-1748.

My own notion is that Thomson was a much wiser man than his friends are willing to acknowledge. His "Seasons" are indeed full of elegant and pious sentiments ; but a rank soil, nay a dunghill, will produce beautiful flowers.—*Boswell*.

Thomson had a true poetical genius, the power of viewing everything in a poetical light. His fault is such a cloud of words sometimes that the sense can hardly peep through. Sheils, who compiled "Cibber's Lives of the Poets," was one day sitting with me. I took down Thomson and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked, "Is not this fine?" Sheils having expressed the highest admiration, "Well, sir," said I, "I have omitted every other line."—*Folinson*.

It (the "Seasons") is a work of inspiration ; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself.—*Wordsworth*.

An elegant and philosophical poet.—*Pope*.

A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems,  
Who void of envy, guile, and lust of gain,  
On virtue still, and nature's pleasing themes  
Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain.—*Lord Lyttleton*.

Thomson, in this praise we thy merit see ;  
The tongue that praises merit, praises thee.—*Savage*.

A verbose poet.—*Goldsmith*.

Thomson was admirable in description ; but it always seemed to me that there was something of affectation in his style, and that his numbers are sometimes not well harmonized. I could wish too that he had confined himself to this country ; for when he describes what he never saw one is forced to read him with some allowance for possible misrepresentation. He was, however, a true poet, and his lasting fame has proved it.—*Cowper*.

I had rather have written the most absurd lines in Lee,<sup>1</sup> than "Leonidas" or the "Seasons."—*Horace Walpole*.

There is nothing in the history of verse, from the restoration of Charles II. to the present time (not even in Collins, we

<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Lee, the dramatist.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> By Glover.

think, and certainly not in Gray) which can compete with the first part of the "Castle of Indolence." His account of the land of "drowsy-head," and—

Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,  
of the disappearance of the sons of Indolence, with the exquisite simile with which it closes,—the huge covered tables, all odorous with spice and wine—the tapestried halls and their Italian pictures—the melancholy music—and, altogether, the golden magnificence and oriental luxuries of the place, and the ministering spirits who—

*Poured all the Arabian heaven upon our nights,*

(an exquisite line)—may stand in comparison with almost anything in the circle of poetry.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1825.

The author of "The Castle of Indolence" paid homage in that admirable poem to the master passion of his own easy nature. Thomson was so excessively lazy that he is recorded to have been seen standing at a peach-tree, with both his hands in his pockets, eating the fruit as it grew.—"*Percy Anecdotes*."

Thomson was blessed with a strong and copious fancy; he has enriched poetry with a variety of new and original images, which he painted from nature itself, and from his own actual observations; his descriptions have, therefore, a distinctness and truth which are utterly wanting to those of poets who have only copied from each other, and have never looked abroad on the subjects themselves. Thomson was accustomed to wander away into the country for days and for weeks, attentive to each rural sight, each rural sound; while many a poet who has dealt for years in the Strand has attempted to describe fields and rivers, and has generally succeeded accordingly.—*Warton*, "*Essay on Pope*."

Thomson's genius does not so often delight us by exquisite minute touches in the description of nature as that of Cowper. It loves to paint on a great scale, and to dash objects off sweepingly by bold strokes—such, indeed, as have almost always distinguished the mighty masters of the lyre and the rainbow. Cowper sets nature before your eyes. Thomson before your imagination. Which do you prefer? Both. Be assured that both poets had pored day and night upon her—in all her aspects,—and that she had revealed herself fully to both. But they in their religion elected different modes of

worship—and both were worthy of the mighty mother. In one mood of mind we love Cowper best—in another Thomson. Sometimes the “Seasons” are almost a task; and sometimes the “Task” is out of season. There is delightful distinctness in all the pictures of the Bard of Olney—glorious gloom or glimmer in most of those of the Bard of Ednam. Cowper paints trees—Thomson woods. Thomson paints in a few mighty words rivers from source to sea, like the mighty Burampooter—Cowper in many no very wondrous lines brightens up one bend of a stream or awakens our fancy to the murmur of one single waterfall.—“*Recreations of Christopher North.*”

### Soame Jenyns.

1704–1787.

He was the man who bore his part in all societies with the most even temper and undisturbed hilarity of any man I ever knew. He came into your house at the very moment you had put upon your card; he dressed himself to do your party honour in all the colours of the jay; his lace indeed had long since lost its lustre, but his coat had faithfully retained its cut since the days when gentlemen wore embroidered figured velvets, with shirt sleeves, high cuffs, and buckram skirts. As nature had cast him in the exact mould of an ill-made pair of stiff stays, he followed her so close in the fashion of his coat that it was doubted if he did not wear them; because he had a protuberant wen just under his poll, he wore a wig that did not cover above half his head. His eyes were protruded like the eyes of a lobster, who wears them at the end of his feelers, and yet there was room between one of these and his nose for another wen, that added nothing to his beauty. Yet I heard this good man very innocently remark, when Gibbon published his history, that he wondered anybody so ugly could write a book.—*Cumberland.*

I have the interest of Christianity too much at heart, not to protest solemnly against your method of defending it.—*Dr. Maclaine.*

His character seems to have been amiable and respected. His life had been very active and diversified. He had studied much, he had seen more. He conversed as well as he wrote. His thoughts were sprightly, his expressions neat. His person

was diminutive, and of a slight make ; and he had a small wen or protuberance on his neck. In his youth he had been so fond of dress as to be distinguished as one of the beaux of his time ; but in the latter part of his life his appearance was rather mean. . . . As a lay-vindicator of divine revelation he ranks with Milton, Locke, Addison, and Newton.—*Dr. Anderson.*

He was one of those who wrote the purest English, that is, the most simple and aboriginal language, the least qualified with foreign impregnation.—*Burke.*

As an author, so long as a true taste of fine writing shall exist, he will have a distinguished place among those who have excelled. Whatever he has published, whether he played with his muse, or appeared in the plain livery of prose, was sought for with avidity and read with pleasure, by those who at the time were esteemed the best judges of composition.—*Cole.*

We had the other night a conversazione at Mrs. Boscawen's. What a comfort for me that none of my friends play at cards ! Soame Jenyns and the learned Mr. Cambridge were of the party. . . . Mr. Jenyns was very polite to me, and as he, his lady, and I were the first visitants, he introduced me himself to everybody that came afterwards, who were strangers to me. There is a fine simplicity about him, and a meek, innocent kind of wit, in Addison's manner, which is very pleasant.—*H. More.*<sup>1</sup>

## Benjamin Franklin.

1706–1790.

Benjamin Franklin who, by bringing a spark from heaven, fulfilled the prophecies he pretended to disbelieve ; Franklin

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<sup>1</sup> In speaking of Soame Jenyns she gave an anecdote descriptive of his extraordinary easiness of temper and careless good-humour. A friend who called upon him one morning was pressed by him to take a slice of cold meat, but the servant, on being summoned, informed his master that there was not a morsel in the larder. When he had left the room, Mr. Jenyns turned to his friend and said, "Now, we had a large round of beef dressed yesterday ; this is therefore rather unaccountable. But I expect these things ; and that I may not be subject to lose my temper, I set down 300*l.* a year to losses by lying and cheating, and thus I maintain my composure."—" *Memoirs of H. More.*"



who wrote a profane addition to the Book of Genesis, who hissed on the colonies against their parent country, who taught men to despise their Sovereign and insult their Redeemer, who did all the mischief in his power while living, and at last died, I think, in America, was, besides all the rest, a plagiarist, as it appears; and the curious epitaph made *on* himself, and as we long believed, *by* himself, was, I am informed, borrowed without acknowledgment from one upon Jacob Tonson, to whom it was more appropriate, comparing himself to an old book, eaten by worms, which on some future day, however, should be new *edited*, after undergoing *revisal* and *correction* from the *Author*.—*Mrs. Piozzi.*

I recommend the study of Franklin to all young people; he was a real philanthropist, a wonderful man. It was said that it was honour enough to any one country to have produced such a man as Franklin.—*Sydney Smith.*

Franklin's quiet memory climbs to heaven,  
Chaining the lightning which he thence hath riven:  
Or drawing from the no less kindled earth  
Freedom and peace to that which boasts his birth.—*Byron.*

It may fairly be observed that the writings of Dr. Franklin are calculated to serve a far more important purpose than that of ministering to the views of party, and keeping alive national divisions, which, however necessitated by circumstances, ought to cease with the occasion, and yield to the spirit of philanthropy. Even amidst the din of war and the contention of faction, it was the constant aim of this excellent man to promote a conciliatory disposition and to correct the acerbity of controversy.—“*Life of Franklin,*” 1818.

A man who makes a great figure in the learned world; and who would still make a greater figure for benevolence and candour, were virtue as much regarded in this declining age as knowledge.—*Lord Kaimes.*

He was a great experimental philosopher, a consummate politician, and a paragon of common sense. His “Poor Robin” was an absolute manual for a country in leading-strings, making its first attempts to go alone. There is nowhere compressed in the same compass so great a fund of local information and political sagacity, as in his “Examination before the Privy Council” in the year 1754. The fine “Parable against Persecution,” which appears in his miscel-

laneous works, is borrowed from Bishop Taylor. Franklin is charged by some with a want of imagination, or with being a mere prosaic, practical man; but the instinct of the true and the useful in him, had more genius in it than all the "metre-ballad-mongering" of those who take him to task.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1829.

## Henry Fielding.<sup>1</sup>

1707-1754.

Fielding has really a fund of true humour, and was to be pitied at his first entrance into the world, having no choice, as he said himself, but to be a hackney-writer or a hackney-coachman.—*Lady M. Montagu*.

What a master of composition Fielding was! Upon my word I think the "Œdipus Tyrannus," "The Alchemist," and "Tom Jones," the three most perfect plots ever planned. And how charming, how wholesome Fielding always is! To take him up after Richardson is like emerging from a sick room heated by stoves into an open lawn on a breezy day of May.—*Coleridge*.

The prose Homer of human nature.—*Byron*.

The romance of "Tom Jones," that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escorial and the imperial eagle of Austria.—*Gibbon*.

Henry Fielding has more wit and humour than all the persons (*i.e.*, Pope, Swift, and others) whom they had been speaking of put together.—*Lord Lyttleton*.

For instance, when you rashly think

No rhymer can like Welsted sink,

His merits balanc'd, you shall find

That Fielding leaves him far behind.<sup>2</sup>—*Swift*.

Who would venture to read one of his works aloud to a modest woman?—*Dr. Burney*.

<sup>1</sup> The estimation in which Fielding was held a short time after his death is exactly described by Mrs. Piozzi, who, in speaking of Fielding's sister, says, "Her brother was author of 'Tom Jones,' not yet obsolete." It is hopeless to think this ironical.—*ED.*

<sup>2</sup> Little did Swift imagine that this very Fielding would hereafter equal him in works of humour, and excel him in drawing and supporting characters, and in the artful conduct and plan of a comic epopee.—*Warton*.

Sir, he was a blockhead.—*Dr. Johnson.*

One of the best writers that England has produced.—*Boswell.*

Of all the works of the imagination to which English genius has given origin, the writings of Henry Fielding are perhaps most decidedly and exclusively her own.—*Sir W. Scott.*

The cause of his superiority is to be sought in his wit and humour, of which he had an inexhaustible fund.—*Chalmers.*

Monsieur de Marivaux in France and Mr. Fielding in England, stand the foremost amongst those who have given a faithful and chaste copy of life and manners ; and by enriching their romances with the best part of the comic art may be said to have brought it to perfection.—*Warburton.*

I cannot offer or hope to make a hero of Harry Fielding. Why hide his faults ? Why conceal his weaknesses in a cloud of periphrasis ? Why not show him, like him as he is, not robed in a marble toga, and draped and polished in a heroic attitude, but with inked ruffles and claret-stains on his tarnished laced coat, and on his manly face marks of good-fellowship, of illness, of kindness, of care ; and wine-stained as you see him, and worn by care and dissipation, that man retains some of the most precious and splendid human qualities and endowments.—*Thackeray.*

I never saw Johnson really angry with me but once ; and his displeasure did him so much honour that I loved him the better for it. I alluded, rather flippantly I fear, to some witty passage in "Tom Jones ;" he replied, "I am shocked to hear you quote from so vicious a book. I am sorry to hear you have read it ; a confession which no modest lady should ever make." I thanked him for his correction ; assured him I thought full as ill of it now as he did, and had only read it at an age when I was more subject to be caught by the wit than able to discern the mischief. Of "Joseph Andrews" I declared my decided abhorrence.—*H. More.*

Through all Mr. Fielding's inimitable comic romances we perceive no such thing as personal malice, no private character dragged into light ; but every stroke is copied from the volume which nature has unfolded to him ; every scene of life is by him represented in its natural colours, and every species of folly or humour is ridiculed with the most exquisite touches. A genius like this is perhaps more useful to mankind than any class of writers ; he serves to dispel all gloom from our minds,

to work off our ill-humours by the gay sensations excited by a well-directed pleasantry, and in a vein of mirth he leads his readers into a knowledge of human nature.—*Christopher Smart, Preface to the "Hilliad," 1752.*

I dined with him (Mr. Allen) yesterday, where I met Mr. Fielding—a poor, emaciated, worn-out rake, whose gout and infirmities have got the better even of his buffoonery.—*Bishop Hurd to Rev. Mr. Balguy.*

## Samuel Johnson.

1709–1784.

A superstitious and brutish bigot. With the exception of the English Dictionary he has done more injury to the English language than even Gibbon himself.—*J. P. Curran.*

A mass of genuine manhood.—*Carlyle.*

Ursa Major.—*Lord Auchinleck.*

He's a brute.—*Adam Smith.*

I admire him, but I cannot bear his style.—*Warburton.*

His notions rose up like the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, all ready clothed, and in bright armour, ready for battle.—*Piozzi.*

Of Mr. Johnson's erudition the world has been the judge, and we who produce each a score of his sayings, as proofs of that wit which in him was inexhaustible, resemble travellers who having visited Delhi or Golconda, bring home each a handful of oriental pearl, to evince the riches of the Great Mogul.—*Ibid.*

Envy was the bosom serpent of this literary despot.—*Miss Seward.*

Of literary merit Johnson was, as we all know, a sagacious but a most severe judge. Such was his discernment that he pierced into the most secret springs of human actions; and such was his integrity that he always weighed the moral characters of his fellow-creatures in the sanctuary.—*Parr.*

It is remarkable that the pomp of diction which has been objected to in Johnson was first assumed in the "Rambler."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson's "pomp of diction" was not first assumed in the "Rambler," but in the "Life of Savage." The inflation of his style in this work was afterwards exaggerated in the "Rambler," moderated in the "Idler," and almost wholly subdued in the "Lives of the Poets."—Ed.

His Dictionary was going on at the same time, and in the course of that work, as he grew familiar with technical and scholastic words, he thought that the bulk of his readers were equally learned, or at least would admire the splendour and dignity of the style. And yet it is well known that he praised in Cowley the ease and unaffected structure of the sentences. —*Murphy*.

It is unfortunate for Johnson that his particularities and frailties can be more distinctly traced than his good and amiable exertions. Could the many bounties he studiously concealed, the many acts of humanity he performed in private, be displayed with equal circumstantiality, his defects would be so far lost in the blaze of his virtues that the latter only would be regarded.'—*Steevens*.

Here Johnson comes—unblest with outward grace,  
His rigid morals stamped upon his face ;  
While strong conceptions struggle in his brain,  
(For even wit is brought to bed with pain.)  
To view him porters with their loads would rest,  
And babes cling, frightened, to the nurse's breast ;  
With looks convuls'd he roars in pompous strain,  
And like an angry lion shakes his mane.  
The Nine, with terror struck, who ne'er had seen  
Aught human with so terrible a mien,  
Debating whether they should stay or run—  
Virtue steps forth and claims him for her son.\*

*Cuthbert Shaw.*

He hated Dissenters and stockjobbers, the excise, and the

<sup>1</sup> "People are apt to forget," wrote Thackeray, "under what Boswellian stimulus the great Doctor uttered many hasty things: things no more indicative of the nature of the depths of his character than the phosphoric gleaming of the sea when struck at night is indicative of a radical corruption of nature."

<sup>2</sup> This portrait, greatly admired in its day, occurs in a poem called "The Race." Shaw's poems form only a few pages. His "Monody to the Memory of a Young Lady" was commended by the critics of his time as a noble composition, and up to a comparatively recent date was printed among "Beauties" and "Elegant Extracts," &c. It is indeed poor stuff. "The Race," on the other hand, has passages in it as vigorous as any to be found in the "Rosciad," which it imitates. The character of Kenrick is as good as that of Settle in Dryden's satire. Shaw was born in 1738, the son of a shoemaker. A meagre memoir of his life is furnished by Anderson in his "Poets of Great Britain."—*ED.*

army, septennial parliaments, and continental connexions.—*Macaulay*.

The conversation of Johnson is strong and clear, and may be compared to an antique statue, whose every vein and muscle is distinct and bold.—*Dr. Percy*.

Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared to him. You may be diverted by them; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug and squeezes laughter out of you, whether you will or no.—*Garrick*.

One of the most nervous, most perspicuous, most concise, most harmonious writers I know. A learned diction improves by time.—*Shenstone*.

With a lumber of learning and some strong parts, Johnson was an odious and mean character. By principle a Jacobite, arrogant, self-sufficient, and overbearing by nature, ungrateful through pride, and of genuine bigotry. . . . His manners were sordid, supercilious, and brutal; his style ridiculously bombastic and vicious: and, in one word, with all the pedantry he had all the gigantic littleness of a country schoolmaster.—*Horace Walpole*.

Here lies Sam Johnson: Reader, have a care,  
Tread lightly, lest you wake a sleeping bear;  
Religious, moral, generous, and humane,  
He was; but self-sufficient, proud, and vain:  
Fond of, and overbearing in dispute;  
A Christian and a scholar,—but a brute.

*Soame Jenyns.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson's review of Soame Jenyns' "Free Inquiry into the Origin of Evil" has been pronounced by Macaulay one of the best things the Doctor ever wrote, "a masterpiece both of reasoning and satirical pleasantry." Jenyns deferred his retort until Johnson was dead; he then produced the brutal and stupid lines I have quoted. But bad as these lines were, Boswell, who would not suffer Johnson to lie unavenged, succeeded in producing worse. Here is the biographer's recrimination:

Here lies a little, ugly, nauseous elf,  
Who judging only from its wretched self,  
Feebly attempted, petulant and vain,  
The origin of evil to explain. •  
A mighty genius, at this elf displeas'd,  
With a strong critic grasp the urchin squeez'd;  
For thirty years its coward spleen it kept,  
Till in the dust the mighty genius slept;

If Dr. Johnson suffered his great mind to descend into trivial amusements, it was—to borrow the image of a friend—like the elephant who sometimes gives a shock to armies and sometimes permits himself to be led by a naked infant.—*J. D'Israeli.*

Johnson to be sure has a rough manner; but no man alive has a better heart. He has nothing of the bear but the skin.—*Goldsmith.*

A sage by all allowed  
Whom to have bred may well make England proud;  
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,  
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;  
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine, and strong,  
Superior praise to the mere poet's song.—*W. Cowper.*

This Johnson, whom you are all so afraid of, will shrink if you come close to him in argument and roar as loud as he.—*Thomas Sheridan.*

At this time (1784), having survived the tempest by which the capital and the court had been so long agitated, expired Dr. Samuel Johnson, a name which cannot be pronounced without veneration. I consider him as the most illustrious and universal man of letters whom I have personally known in my time; because I contemplate Burke more as an orator than an author, whatever fame he may have acquired by his writings. Gibbon's reputation, however deservedly high, is limited to a single branch of composition, and to a single work. With Hume and Robertson I was not acquainted. Adam Smith, Jacob Bryant, and Horace Walpole—all of whom I knew—eminent as were their talents, could not on the whole sustain a competition with Johnson.—*Wraxall's "Posthumous Memoirs."*

Dr. Johnson seems to have been really more powerful in discoursing *viva voce* in conversation than with his pen in hand. It seems as if the excitement of company called something like reality and consecutiveness into his reasonings, which in his writings I cannot see. His antitheses are almost always verbal only; and sentence after sentence in the "Rambler" may be pointed out to which you cannot attach any definite

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Then stunk and fretted in expiring snuff,  
And blink'd at Johnson with its last poor puff.

The last couplet may be said to be absolutely meaningless.—*ED.*

meaning whatever.<sup>1</sup> In his political pamphlets there is more truth of expression than in his other works, for the same reason that his conversation is better than his writings in general.—*Coleridge*, "*Table Talk*."

Johnson is the very man *Chesterfield* describes—a Hottentot indeed: and though your abilities are respectable you can never be respected yourself. He has the aspect of an idiot, without the faintest ray of sense gleaming from any one feature, with the most awkward garb, and unpowdered grey wig on one side only of his head; he is for ever dancing the devil's jig, and sometimes he makes the most drivelling effort to whistle some thought in his absent paroxysms.—*Dr. Campbell*.

He was distinguished by vigorous understanding and inflexible integrity. His imagination was not more lively than was necessary to illustrate his maxims; his attainments in science were inconsiderable, and in learning, far from the first class; they chiefly consisted in that sort of knowledge which a powerful mind collects from miscellaneous reading and various intercourse with mankind.—*Sir F. Mackintosh*.

Strong sense, ungraced by sweetness or decorum.—*Aaron Hill*.

Dr. Johnson's political principles ran high, both in Church and State: he wished power to the king and to the heads of the Church, as the laws of England have established; but I know he disliked absolute power; and I am very sure of his disapprobation of the doctrines of the Church of Rome; because about three weeks before we came abroad, he said to my *Cornelia*, "You are going where the ostentatious pomp of church ceremonies attracts the imagination; but if they want to persuade you to change, you must remember that by increasing your faith you may be persuaded to become a Turk."—*Lady Knight*.

That man is not contented with believing the Bible; but he fairly resolves, I think, to believe nothing but the Bible. Johnson, though so wise a fellow, is more like King David than King Solomon, for he says in his haste, *all men are liars*.—*Hogarth*.

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<sup>1</sup> It was Lord Lytton, I believe, who said that two essays could be made out of every "*Rambler*."—*ED*.



## George, Lord Lyttleton.

1709-1773.

Absurdity was predominant in Lyttleton's compositions; it entered equally into his politics, his apologies, his public pretences, his private conversations. With the figure of a spectre, and the gesticulations of a puppet, he talked heroics through his nose, made declamations at a visit, and played at cards with scraps of history or sentences of Pindar. He had set out on a political love-plan, though with nothing of a lover but absence of mind, and nothing of a poet but absence of meaning; yet he was far from wanting parts; spoke well when he had studied his speeches, and loved to reward and promote merit in others.—*Horace Walpole*.

Of his private character there can be but one opinion. Rejecting the degenerate standard of his age, he illustrated in his practice those nobler views, which he derived from the example of his ancestors, of the requisite character and attainments of an English gentleman. Sincerely and earnestly religious, when to be so was unfashionable, a devoted husband, an affectionate but unhappy father, never deserting his friend, ever opening his hand to distress in every form, he closed a wise and good life by an edifying death.—*R. Phillimore*.

His history<sup>1</sup> is little read, and not even consulted as much as its laborious diligence deserves; but the period is too remote and the subject too voluminously treated for popularity; and the style which Walpole so much extols<sup>2</sup> seems diffuse and flat to the taste of an age formed on the dazzling brilliancy of Gibbon, or the clearer and more mellowed colouring of Hume.—*Quarterly Review*, 1846.

He was a very early writer both in verse and prose. His "Progress of Love" and his "Persian Letters" were both written when he was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young man is very visible in both. The verses cant of shepherds, and flocks, and crooks dressed with flowers; and

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<sup>1</sup> "History of Henry II." His "Dialogues of the Dead" has also gone the way of his history.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> "Alas, my lord! your style, which will fix and preserve our language, cannot do what language cannot do—reform the nature of man."—*Walpole to Lyttleton*.—ED.

the letters have something of that indistinct and headstrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always suffers to cool as he passes forward.—*Johnson*.

One of those little fellows who are sometimes called great men.—*Smollett*.

## Paul Whitehead.

1710-1774.

May I (can worse disgrace on manhood fall?)  
Be born a Whitehead and baptized a Paul.—*Churchill*.

Paul Whitehead, a satirical poet of bad character, was the son of a tailor. In politics Whitehead was a follower of Bubb Dodington; in private life he was the friend and companion of the profligate Sir Francis Dashwood, Wilkes, Churchill, &c.; and like them was a member of the "Hell-fire Club."—*Lord Dover*.

We have seen that the worthy, modest, and ingenious Mr. Robert Dodsley has taste enough to perceive its<sup>1</sup> uncommon merit, and thought it creditable to have a share in it. The fact is, that at a future conference he bargained for the whole property of it, for which he gave Johnson ten guineas, who told me, "I might perhaps have accepted of less; but that Paul Whitehead had a little before got ten guineas for a poem, and I would not take less than Paul Whitehead." I may here observe that Johnson appeared to me to undervalue Paul Whitehead upon every occasion when he was mentioned, and in my opinion did not do him justice; but when it is considered that Paul Whitehead was a member of a riotous and profane club, we may account for Johnson's having a prejudice against him. Paul Whitehead was indeed unfortunate in being not only slighted by Johnson, but violently attacked by Churchill. . . . Yet I shall never be persuaded to think meanly of the author of so brilliant and pointed a satire as "Manners."  
—*Boswell*.

Paul had taste, and imitated only models of the rarest beauty; and this imitation was better than a low originality

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson's satire, "London: a Poem."

without taste at all. His thoughts were marked by a manly strength, and his phrases abound in a rich vein of poetical expression. His quarry was folly wherever found, and particularly "the big, rich, mighty dunces of the State." . . . Paul was one of the finest of gentlemen in his way, and associated with the very finest of the same class. He not only had his country house at Twickenham, but a coruscant circle about him of wits whose brilliancy was not considered as tarnished by the most mouldy blasphemy.—*Dr. Doran, "Habits and Men."*

## David Hume.

1711-1776.

It is Hume who is read by everybody. Hume is the historian whose views and opinions insensibly become our own. He is respected by the most enlightened reader; he is the guide and philosopher of the ordinary reader, to whose mind on all the topics connected with our history he entirely gives the tone and law.—*Professor Smyth.*

Hume, without positively asserting much more than he can prove, gives prominence to all the subjects which support his case. He glides lightly over those which are unfavourable to it. His own witnesses are applauded and encouraged; the statements which seem to throw discredit on them are controverted; the contradictions into which they fall are explained away; a clear and connected abstract of their evidence is given. Everything that is offered on the other side is scrutinized with the utmost severity; every suspicious circumstance is a ground for comment and invective; what cannot be denied is extenuated and passed over without notice. Concessions even are sometimes made; but this insidious candour only increases the effect of this vast mass of sophistry.—*Macaulay.*

Hume is always on his guard: no holiness, no beauty, no purity, no utility can by any chance betray or seduce him to find an excuse for the sin of religion.—*Quarterly Review.*

Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.—*Adam Smith.*

The calm philosophy, the careless inimitable beauties . . .

often forced me to close the volume with a mixed sensation of delight and despair.—*Gibbon.*

Sir, Hume is a Tory by chance, as being a Scotchman ; but not upon a principle of duty, for he has no principle. If he is anything, he is a Hobbist.—*Johnson.*

Hume's character of himself was well drawn and full of candour ; he spoke of himself as he ought, but added what surprised us all, that plain as his manners were, and apparently careless of attention, vanity was his predominant weakness. That vanity led him to publish his essays which he grieved over, not that he had changed his opinions, but that he thought he had injured society by disseminating them. "Do you remember the sequel of that affair?" said Hume. "Yes, I do," replied my mother, laughing. "You told me that although I thought your character a sincere one, it was not so ; there was a particular feature omitted that we were still ignorant of, and that you would add it. Like a fool, I gave you the MS. and you thrust it into the fire, adding, 'Oh ! what an idiot I had nearly proved myself to be to leave such a document in the hands of a parcel of women !'"—*Lady Anne Barnard, in "Lives of the Lindsays."*

He by no means considered Mr. Hume as an original or inventive genius. The subtlety of his reasoning, the extent of his reading, the depth and solidity of his reflections he greatly admired ; but still he thought that he did not draw so much as Dr. Smith or even Lord Kaimes from the stores of his own mind. He said that he trod in the footsteps of Bolingbroke and certain French philosophers ; that he greedily imbibed their ideas, and was studious to glean what they left behind them ; that he informed himself with great industry of the opinions and views of great men, in all ages of the world, compared them together, preferred what he thought best, drew corollaries from their reasoning, and on the whole exhibited a striking example of industry and of judgment. But he availed himself of the ignorance of the world to pass that as new which in reality was old ; and that his ideas were either borrowed from other writers, or were deductions and improvements on conclusions already established.—*Anderson's "Life of Wilkie."*

Fitzpatrick, who had been much in the company of David Hume, used always to speak of him as a "delicious creature."—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

Hume wrote his history as witches say their prayers—backwards.—*Horne Tooke.*

The doctrine of Mr. Hume . . . is not that we have not reached truth, but that we never can reach it. It is an absolute and universal system of scepticism, professing to be derived from the very structure of the understanding, which, if any man could seriously believe it, would render it impossible for him to form an opinion upon any subject—to give the faintest assent to any proposition—to ascribe any meaning to the words Truth and Falsehood—to believe, to inquire, or to reason; and on the very same ground, to disbelieve, to dissent, or to doubt—to adhere to his own principle of universal doubt; and lastly, if he be consistent with himself, even to *think*.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1821.

We would scarcely attempt to defend the prejudices and minor inaccuracies of Hume: but it seems to us that sufficient account is not made of the wonderful quickness and sagacity of that great writer and most admirable of narrators, whose intuitive perception generally made up for his indolence in examining records and original opinions.—*G. L. Craik.*

He alone appears to have possessed the sort of intellectual versatility; the power of contracting the mental organs to the abstractions of speculative philosophy, or of dilating them for the large and complicated deliberations of business.—*Sir J. Mackintosh.*

This writer's bias to the French tastes and manners, which appears throughout his history, is ridiculous; his political doctrines arising out of his bigotry to the Stuart family are pernicious; and his libertinism, which breaks out on so many occasions, is detestable. Otherwise this is the most readable history we have of England. The faults of the composition are a too frequent affectation of philosophical disquisition, and an incorrect and sometimes an inflated style. The former is unsuited to the general nature of history; the latter is a capital blemish in a work that pretends to be nothing more than a compilation. With these faults his work will be read and admired. The worst is, the mediocrity of this history will prevent an able writer from undertaking a better.—*Dr. Hurd.*

Mallet's wife, a foolish and conceited woman, one evening introduced herself to David Hume at an assembly, saying, "*We deists*, Mr. Hume, should know one another." Hume was exceedingly displeased and disconcerted, and replied,

"Madam, I am no deist; I do not so style myself; neither do I desire to be known by that appellation."—*Hardy's "Life of Lord Charlemont."*

## Thomas Davies.

1712-1785.

With him came mighty Davies; on my life  
That Davies hath a very pretty wife!  
Statesman all over! in plots famous grown,  
He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone!

*Churchill.*

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated for her beauty), though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character.—*Boswell.*

Sir, Davies has learning enough to give credit to a clergyman.—*Fohnson.*<sup>1</sup>

A tenth-rate actor, third-rate bookseller, and sober Scotchman.—*P. Fitzgerald.*

## Richard Glover

1712-1785.

Since Milton he was second to none of our English poets in his discriminating judicious acquaintance with all ancient as well as modern literature. Witness his "Leonidas," "Medea," "Boadicea," and "London;" for, having formed his own character upon the best models of the Greek writers, he lived as if he had been bred a disciple of Socrates or companion of Aristides.—*Brocklesby.*

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<sup>1</sup> The Doctor, however, had a sincere contempt for Davies. Some one praised Swift's pamphlet, "The Conduct of the Allies." "Sir," cries the Doctor, "his 'Conduct of the Allies' is a performance of very little ability. . . . Why, sir, Tom Davies might have written the 'Conduct of the Allies.'"

I look upon "Leonidas" as one of those few poems of distinguished worth and excellence which will be handed down with respect to all posterity, and which in the long revolution of past centuries but two or three countries have been able to produce. And I cannot help congratulating my own, that after having in the last age brought forth a Milton, she has in this produced two more such poets as we have the happiness to see flourish now together; I mean Mr. Pope and Mr. Glover.—*Lord Lyttleton.*

His "Hosier's Ghost" is one of the most pathetic and beautiful ballads in the English language.—*Dr. Anderson.*

Our author, in his principal Grecian heroes, and most eminently in "Leonidas," their leader, has represented, with singular strength and truth, virtuous characters of high spirit superior to the greatest misfortunes, which is an achievement Plato thought the most difficult of all poetical imitation.—*Dr. Pemberton.*

I have rarely heard a more curious instance of the absence of mind produced by poetic enthusiasm than that which occurred when the author of "Leonidas" made one of a party of literati assembled at the house of Mr. Gilbert West at Wickham. Lord Lyttleton, on opening his window one morning, perceived Glover pacing to and fro with a whip in his hand, by the side of a fine bed of tulips just ready to blow, and which were the peculiar care of the lady of the mansion, who worshipped Flora with as much ardour as Glover did the Muses. His mind was at the instant teeming with the birth of some little ballad, when Lord Lyttleton, to his astonishment and dismay, perceived him applying his whip with great vehemence to the stalks of the unfortunate tulips, all of which, before there was time to awaken him from his reverie, he had completely levelled with the ground; and when the devastation he had committed was afterwards pointed out to him, he was so perfectly unconscious of the proceeding that he could with difficulty be made to believe it.—*Hannah More.*

Lawrence Sterne,

\* 1713-1768.

With regard to Sterne and the charge of licentiousness which presses so seriously upon his character as a writer, I would

remark that there is a sort of knowingness, the wit of which depends—1st, on the modesty it gives pain to ; or, 2ndly, on the innocence or innocent ignorance over which it triumphs ; or 3rdly, on a certain oscillation in the individual's own mind between the remaining good and the encroaching evil of his nature—a sort of dallying with the devil—a fluxionary art of combining courage and cowardice, as when a man snuffs a candle with his fingers for the first time, or, better still perhaps, like that trembling with which a child touches a hot tea-urn, because it has been forbidden ; so that the mind has its own white and black angel ; the same or similar amusement as may be supposed to take place between an old debauchee and a prude—the feeling resentment on the one hand from a prudential anxiety to preserve appearances and have a character ; and on the other with inward sympathy with the enemy. We have only to suppose society innocent, and then nine-tenths of this sort of wit would be like a stone that falls in snow, making no sound, because exciting no resistance ; the remainder rests on its being an offence against the good manners of human nature itself. This source, unworthy as it is, may doubtless be combined with wit, drollery, fancy, and even humour ; and we have only to regret the *mésalliance* ; but that the latter are quite distinct from the former may be made evident by abstracting from our imagination the morality of the characters of Mr. Shandy, my Uncle Toby, and Trim, which are all antagonists to this spurious sort of wit, from the rest of “Tristram Shandy,” and by supposing, instead of them, the presence of two or three callous debauchees. The result will be pure disgust. Sterne cannot be too severely censured for thus using the best dispositions of our nature as the panders and condiments for the basest.—*Coleridge*.

He could exhibit on the same stage the finest feelings of our nature, the most delicate sentiments, and the most pathetic situations ; with, at the very same time, a studied lewdness, and a coarse, though witty buffoonery. He could ascend the pulpit, as was well said, “in a harlequin's jacket,” and he could write bawdry to his daughter.—*Quarterly Review*, 1847.

Sterne was a man of genius, but a sad sinner. Strange that nature should sometimes be so kind to men who have no hearts ! But let us not say that he had no heart, and a good one—though no man save himself knew how he had corrupted it. Not otherwise could he have imagined my Father, and



my Uncle Toby, and Corporal Trim. They had all hearts, and how have they touched ours! No phantoms they—flesh and blood like ourselves; but we pass away—they endure for ever: we are the phantoms. Peace then be with Lawrence.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1835.

The third and fourth volumes of "Tristram Shandy" are the dregs of nonsense, and have universally met the contempt they deserve.—*Horace Walpole*.

Soon after "Tristram" had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition whether she had read his book. "I have not, Mr. Sterne," was the answer, "and to be plain with you, I am informed that it is not proper for female perusal." "My dear good lady," replied the author, "do not be gulled by such stories; the book is like your young heir there (pointing to a child of three years old who was rolling on the carpet in his white tunics), he shows a good deal that at times is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence."—*Sir W. Scott*.

The man is a great jester, not a great humourist. He goes to work systematically and of cold blood; paints his face, puts on his ruff and motley clothes, and lays down his carpet and tumbles on it.—*Thackeray*.

He preferred whining over a dead ass to relieving a living mother.—*Byron*.

Johnson: "Any man who has a name or who has the power of pleasing will be very generally invited in London. The man Sterne, I have been told, has had engagements for three months." Goldsmith: "And a very dull fellow." Johnson: "Why, no, sir."—"Life of Johnson."

No classic could endure Sterne's style.—*Dr. Gregory*.

"Tris'tram Shandy" is still a greater object of admiration, the man as well as the book. One is invited to dinner, when he dines, a fortnight before. As to the volumes yet published, there is much good fun in them, and humour sometimes hit and sometimes missed. Have you read his "Sermons," with his own comick figure, from a painting by Reynolds, at the head of them? They are in the style I think most proper for the pulpit, and show a strong imagination and a sensible heart; but you see him often tottering on the verge of laughter, and ready to throw his periwig in the face of the audience.—*Gray*.

The famous "Tristram Shandy" itself is not absolutely original; for when I was at Derby in the summer of 1744, I

strolled by mere chance into a bookseller's shop, where, however, I could find nothing to tempt curiosity but a strange book about Corporal Bates, which I bought and read for want of better sport, and found it to be the very novel from which Sterne took his first idea. The character of Uncle Toby, the behaviour of Corporal Trim, even the name of Tristram itself, seems to be borrowed from this stupid history of Corporal Bates, forsooth!—*Mrs. Piozzi*.

Sterne, when he had finished his first and second volume of "Tristram Shandy," offered them to a bookseller at York for fifty pounds; but was refused. He came to town with his MSS. in his pocket, and he and Robert Dodsley agreed in a manner of which neither repented.—*I. D'Israeli*.

Mrs. Medalle (Sterne's daughter) sent to all the correspondents of her deceased father,<sup>1</sup> begging the letters which he had written to them; among other wits she sent to Wilkes with the same request. He sent for answer, that as there happened to be nothing extraordinary in those he had received he had burnt or lost them. On which, the faithful editor of her father's works sent back to say that if Mr. Wilkes would be so good as to write a few letters in imitation of her father's style, it would do just as well, and she would insert them.—"*Memoirs of Hannah More*."

Our last specimen of humour, and with all his faults the best; our finest, if not our strongest, for Yorick, and Corporal Trim, and Uncle Toby have yet no brotherhood but in Don Quixote, far as he lies above them.—*Carlyle*.

And now for Sterne, who, when he sat to Reynolds, had not written the stories of "Le Fevre," "The Monk," or "The Captive," but was known only as a fellow "of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy." In this matchless portrait, with all its expres-

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<sup>1</sup> Sterne's funeral was as friendless as his deathbed. Becket, his publisher, was the only one who followed the body to its undistinguished grave in the parish burial-ground of Marylebone, near Tyburn gallows-stand. Nor was this ungraced funeral the last indignity of that poor body, over whose infirmities Sterne had alternately puled and jested. The graveyard lay far from houses; no watch was kept after dark; all shunned the ill-famed neighbourhood. Sterne's grave was marked down by the body-snatchers, the corpse dug up and sold to the professor of anatomy at Cambridge. A student, present at the dissection, recognised, under the scalpel, the face—not one easily to be forgotten, as we know from Reynolds picture—of the brilliant wit and London lion of a few seasons before.—"*Maloniana*."

sion of intellect and humour, there is the sly look for which we are prepared by the insidious mixture of so many abominations with the finest wit in "Tristram Shandy" and the "Sentimental Journey," so different from the openness of Swift's obscenity, and so much more detestable. Nor is the position of the figure less characteristic than the expression of the face. It is easy, but it has not the easiness of health. Sterne props himself up. His wig was subject to odd chances from the humour that was uppermost with the wearer. When by mistake he had thrown a fair sheet of manuscript into the fire instead of the foul one, he tells us that he snatched off his wig "and threw it perpendicularly, with all imaginable violence, up to the top of the room." While he was sitting to Reynolds, this same wig had contrived to get itself a little on one side; and the painter, with that readiness in taking advantage of accident to which we owe so many of the delightful novelties in his works, painted it so, for he must have known that a mitre would not sit long bishop-fashion on the head before him, and it is surprising what a Shandean air this venial impropriety of the wig gives to its owner.—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

## William Shenstone.

1714-1763.

His divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species.—*Burns.*

His mind was not very comprehensive, nor his curiosity active; he had no value for those parts of knowledge which he had not himself cultivated.—*Johnson.*

His character as a writer will be distinguished by simplicity with elegance, and genius with correctness. He had a sublimity equal to the highest attempts; yet from the indolence of his temper he chose rather to amuse himself in culling flowers at the foot of the mount, than to take the trouble of climbing the more arduous steeps of Parnassus.—*R. Dodsley.*

Poor man! he was always wishing for money, for fame, and other distinctions; and his whole philosophy consisted in living against his will in retirement, and in a place which his taste had adorned, but which he only enjoyed when people of distinction came to see and commend it.—*Gray.*

The life of Shenstone was passed in an amusement which

was to him an eternal source of disappointment and anguish. His favourite *serme ornée*, while it displayed all the taste and elegancies of the poet, displayed also his characteristic poverty. His feeling mind was often pained by those invidious comparisons which the vulgar were perpetually making with the stately scenes of Hagley's neighbouring magnificence.—*I. D'Israeli.*

He was a man of taste rather than genius, and may claim a full alliance with the poets of nature, but is as far from the association with great poets, with such men as Milton or Shakespeare, Burns or Elliott, as the glowworm is with the comet.—*William Howitt.*

To you whose groves protect the feather'd choirs,  
Who lend their artless notes a willing ear,  
To you, whom pity moves and taste inspires,  
The Doric strain belongs, O Shenstone. . . . —*Jago.*<sup>1</sup>

## George Whitfield.

1714-1770.

His eloquence was powerful, his views pious and charitable, his assiduity almost incredible.—*Boswell.*

Whitfield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does; he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was strange. Were Astley to preach a sermon, standing upon his head on a horse's back, he would collect a multitude to hear him; but no wise man would say he had made a better sermon for that. I never treated Whitfield's ministry with contempt; I believe he did good. He had devoted himself to the lower classes of mankind, and among them he was of use. But when familiarity and noise claim the praise that is due to knowledge, art, and elegance, we must beat down such pretensions.—*Johnson.*

He had a loud and clear voice, and articulated his words so

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<sup>1</sup> Jago was a poet who flourished between the years 1715 and 1781. Dr. Anderson has included him in his "Poets of Great Britain." Many pages of flatulent blank verse distinguish this poetaster in the line of descent from his *confrères*, who were more given to epigrammatic rhymes and couplets regularly pausing. Jago was a Scotchman without humour, wit, or poetry, and with but very little intelligence.—Ed.

perfectly that he might be heard and understood at a great distance ; especially as his auditories observed the most perfect silence. He preached one evening from the top of the Court House steps which were in the middle of Market Street, and on the west side of Second Street, which crosses it at right angles. Both streets were filled with his hearers to a considerable distance ; being among the hindmost in Market Street, I had the curiosity to learn how far he could be heard, by retiring backwards down the street towards the river ; and I found his voice distinct till I came near Front Street, when some noise in that street obscured it. Imagining then a semicircle of which my distance should be the radius, and that it was filled with auditors to each of whom I allowed two square feet, I computed that he might well be heard by more than 30,000. This reconciled me to the newspaper accounts of his having preached to 25,000 people in the fields,<sup>1</sup> and to the histories of generals haranguing whole armies, of which I had sometimes doubted. By hearing him often I came to distinguish easily between sermons newly composed and those which he had often preached in the course of his travels. His delivery of the latter was so improved by frequent repetition that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice was so perfectly well-turned and well-placed, that without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse ; a pleasure of much the same kind with that received from an excellent piece of music. . . . I am satisfied that if he had never written anything, he would have left behind him a much more numerous and important sect, and his reputation might in that case have been still growing even after his death.—*Benjamin Franklin.*

A preaching, prison-preaching, field-preaching Esq. strikes

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<sup>1</sup> Whitfield was once preaching in an open field to an immense audience. A drummer who was in the crowd, influenced perhaps by a regard for the dignity of the English hierarchy, furiously beat his drum whenever Whitfield grew energetic. In vain Whitfield raised his voice ; the clamour of the drum drowned him. At last, turning towards the drummer, he cried, "Friend, you and I serve the two greatest masters existing, but in different callings. You beat up for volunteers for King George, I for the Lord Jesus :—in God's name, then, let us not interrupt each other ; the world is wide enough for both, and we may get recruits in abundance." This speech had such an effect on the drummer that he went away in the highest good humour, leaving Whitfield in peaceable possession of the field.—*ED.*

more than all the black gowns and lawn sleeves in the world. And if I am not mistaken, the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls will let the world, and his own children too, know that he will not be prescribed to, in respect to men, or garb, or place, much less will he be confined to any order or set of men under heaven.—*Whitfield to Rowland Hill.*

Whitfield's zealous spirit exhausted all its energies in preaching, and his full dedication to God was honoured by unbounded success. The effect produced by his sermons was indescribable, arising in a great degree from the most perfect forgetfulness of self, during the solemn moment of declaring the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. His evident sincerity impressed every hearer, and is said to have forcibly struck Lord Chesterfield when he heard him at Lady Huntingdon's.—*Sidney's "Life of Rowland Hill."*

Taking his stand on some rising knoll, his tall and graceful figure dressed with elaborate propriety, and composed into an easy and commanding attitude, Whitfield's "clear blue eye" ranged over thousands and tens of thousands, drawn up in close files on the plain below, or clustering into masses on every adjacent eminence. A "rabble rout" hung on the skirts of the mighty host; and the feelings of the devout were disturbed by the scurril jests of the illiterate, and the cold sarcasms of the more polished spectators of their worship. But the rich and varied tones of a voice of unequalled depth and compass quickly silenced every ruder sound—as in rapid succession its ever-changing melodies passed from the calm of simple narrative to the measured distinctness of argument, to the vehemence of reproof, and the pathos of heavenly consolation. "Sometimes the preacher wept exceedingly, stamped loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome that for a few seconds one would suspect he could never recover, and when he did, nature required some little time to compose himself." . . . The agitated assembly caught the passions of the speaker, and exulted, wept, or trembled at his bidding. He stood before them in popular belief, a persecuted man, spurned and rejected by lordly prelates, yet still a presbyter of the Church, and clothed with her authority; his meek and lowly demeanour chastened and elevated by the conscious grandeur of the apostolic succession. The thoughtful gazed earnestly on a scene of solemn interest, pregnant with some strange and enduring influence on the future condition of mankind. But

the wise and the simple alike yielded to the enchantment ; and the thronging multitude gave utterance to their emotions in every form in which nature seeks relief from feeling too strong for mastery.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1838.

### Sir John Hill.

1716-1775.

For physic and farces his equal there scarce is ;  
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is.—*Garrick*.

Invite him once a week to dinner,  
He'll saint you, tho' the vilest sinner ;  
Have you a smiling, vacant face ?  
He gives you soul, expression, grace.  
Swears what you will, unswears it too !  
What will not beef and pudding do ?—*Epigram*.

He puffs himself, forbear to chide ;  
An insect vile and mean  
Must first, he knows, be magnify'd,  
Before it can be seen.—*Epigram*.

Word-valiant wight, thou great he-shrew,  
That wrangles to no end ;  
Since nonsense is not false nor true,  
Thou'rt no man's foe or friend.—*Epigram*.

To beat one man great Hill was fated ;  
What man ? a man that he created.—*Epigram*.

What Hill one day says, he the next does deny ;  
And carefully tells us 'tis all a d— lie ;  
Dear Doctor, this candour from you is not wanted,  
For why should you own it ? 'tis taken for granted.  
*Epigram*.

Busy, curious, hungry Hill,  
Write of me, and write your fill.  
Freely welcome to abuse,  
Couldst thou tire thy railing muse,  
Make tife most of this you can,  
Strife is short, and life's a span.  
Both alike your works and pay  
Hasten quick to their decay :

• This a trifle, those no more,  
 Though repeated to threescore :  
 Threescore volumes when they're writ  
 Will appear at last. . . .—*H. Woodward.*

It appears that the first effort of this universal genius, who is lately become remarkable as the Bobadil of literature, was to excel in pantomime. What was the event? he was damned. Mr. Cross, the prompter, took great pains to fit him for the part of Oroonoko—he was damned. He attempted Captain Blandford—he was damned. He acted Constant in the "Provok'd Wife"—he was damned. He represented the Botanist in "Romeo and Juliet" at the little theatre in the Haymarket, under the direction of Mr. Theo. Cibber—he was damned. He appeared in the character of Lothario at the celebrated theatre in May Fair—he was damned there too.—*Note to the "Hilliad."*

He used to write anonymous books, and then other books commending those books, in which there was something of rascality.—*Johnson.*<sup>1</sup>

O thou ! whatever name delights thine ear !  
 Pimp ? poet ? puffer ? pothecary ? player ?  
 Whose baseless fame by vanity is buoy'd,  
 Like the huge earth, self-centred in the void.—*Smart.*

John Hill was born in 1716. His father, who was a clergy-

<sup>1</sup> "Of this talent," says Smart, "take a specimen. In a letter to himself he saith : 'You have discovered many of the beauties of the ancients ; they are obliged to you ; we are obliged to you ; were they living they would thank you ; we who are alive do thank you.' " Hill, of whose writings absolutely nothing survives, was not only popular enough to provoke the sarcasms of the chief wits of his day, and successful enough to secure for himself the notice of every writer who has dealt with that epoch of English literature, but was fortunate or unfortunate enough to attract the attention of George III., who, on his meeting Dr. Johnson in the library at Buckingham House, asked the philosopher for his opinion of Dr. Hill. Dr. Johnson soon let the King know what sort of a man Hill was. But, said the moralist, "I began to consider that I was depreciating this man in the estimation of his sovereign, and thought it was time for me to say something more favourable." He therefore said that Dr. Hill was a very curious observer, and that he might have been a very considerable man had he not chosen to tell the world more than he knew.—*Ed.*



man, placed him as apprentice with a surgeon at Westminster, and having married early he set up for himself in that profession, but soon dissatisfied with it, he applied himself to the study of botany, and obtained the patronage of the Duke of Richmond and Lord Petre. This pursuit he also relinquished, and he next applied himself to the stage, and made several unsuccessful attempts as an actor at Drury Lane and the little theatre in the Haymarket, in the latter of which he performed the part of the quack doctor in "Romeo and Juliet." He afterwards indulged the spleen occasioned by this failure by decrying the best actors of the day. . . . On the publication of his "Supplement to Chambers," he made an attempt to obtain admission into the Royal Society; but his unprincipled character being now well known, he was rejected, and in revenge . . . published a hoax on (the Society) in a clever though ridiculous pamphlet (under the pseudonym of Abraham Johnson), entitled "Lucina sine Concubitu," in which he pretended to show that generation might take place without the intercourse of the sexes. This book made some noise at the time, and gave birth to several other pamphlets. Hill now obtained a foreign diploma of doctor in medicine, drove about in his chariot, and took upon himself all the airs of a fashionable author. His overweening vanity made him an object of ridicule; he strutted about with an affected air, was a regular attendant at the theatres and places of amusement, exhibited himself at the fashionable lounges, aped the manners of a fop, and pretended to enjoy the favours of ladies of quality.—"*Caricature History of the Georges.*"

Posterity . . . regards Dr. Hill as an able botanist; and though his nostrums and panaceas are now exploded, his voluminous works in natural history have advanced towards fame with nearly as much rapidity as his empirical productions have descended towards oblivion.—*Dr. Anderson.*

## Thomas Gray.

1716–1771.

He always aims at the highest things, and if he does fail, it is only by a hair's breadth.—*Hazlitt.*

Sir, I don't think Gray a first-rate poet. He has not a bold

imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime.—*Johnson*.<sup>1</sup>

Humour was his natural and original turn.—*Horace Walpole*.

Perhaps he was the most learned man in Europe. He was equally acquainted with the elegant and profound parts of science, and that not superficially but thoroughly. He knew every branch of history, both natural and civil, had read all the original historians of England, France, and Italy, and was a great antiquarian. Criticism, metaphysics, morals, politics, made a principal part of his study. Voyages and travels of all sorts were his favourite amusements; and he had a fine taste in painting, prints, architecture, and gardening.—*Rev. Mr. Temple to Boswell*.

Had Gray written nothing but his "Elegy," high as he stands, I am not sure that he would not stand higher; without it his Odes would be insufficient for his fame.—*Byron*.

We cannot without some regret behold those talents, so capable of giving pleasure to all, exerted in efforts that can at best amuse only the few; we cannot behold the rising poet seeking fame among the learned without hinting to him the same advice that Isocrates used to give his scholars: *study the people*.—*Goldsmith, in the Monthly Review*.

How enchantingly beautiful was Gray's Muse when she wandered through the churchyard in her morning dress! But when she was arrayed in gorgeous attire, in a monstrous hoop and a brocade petticoat, I could gaze upon her indeed; she made an impression on my eye, but not on my heart.—*Langhorne to H. More*.

He was the most finished artist, whose productions to the eye of the critic, and more especially to the artist, afforded a new kind of pleasure not incompatible with a distinct perception of the art employed.—*Sir F. Mackintosh*.

I have been reading Gray's works, and think him the only poet since Shakspeare entitled to the character of sublime. Perhaps you will remember that I once had a different opinion of him. I was prejudiced. He did not belong to our Thurs-

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<sup>1</sup> "Sir," said Johnson to Boswell, on the latter demurring to the epithet "dull" as applied to such a poet, "Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made people think him great. He was a mechanical poet."—*Ed*.

day Society, and was an Eton man, which lowered him prodigiously in our esteem. I once thought Swift's "Letters" the best that could be written ; but I like Gray's better. His humour or his wit, or whatever it is to be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, and yet I think equally poignant with the Dean's.—*William Cowper.*

I had always a passion for Gray, which his "Letters" are calculated to increase. His poetry is so exquisite that the delight I felt in reading him is generally mixed with regret that he wrote so little. . . . In my poor opinion (his "Letters") possess all the graces and all the ease which I apprehend ought to distinguish this familiar species of composition. They have also another and a higher excellence : the temper and spirit he almost constantly discovers in the unguarded confidence and security of friendship, will rank him among the most amiable of men, as his charming verses will give him a place among the first of lyric poets.—*Hannah More.*

I was a mere lad when Mason's "Gray" was published. I read it in my young days with delight, and have done so ever since. The "Letters" have for me an inexpressible charm ; they are as witty as Walpole's, and have, what his want, true wisdom.—*Rogers.*

## David Garrick.

1716–1779.

Garrick was a frequent visitor in Poland Street and St. Martin's Lane. That wonderful actor loved the society of children, partly from good nature and partly from vanity. The ecstasies of mirth and terror, which his gestures and play of countenance never failed to produce in a nursery, flattered him quite as much as the applause of mature critics. He often exhibited all his powers of mimicry for the amusement of the little Burneys, awed them by shuddering and crouching as if he saw a ghost, scared them by raving like a maniac in St. Luke's, and then at once became an auctioneer, a chimney-sweeper, or an old woman, and made them laugh till the tears ran down their cheeks.—*Macaulay.*

Boswell : "Would not you, sir, start as Mr. Garrick does, if you saw a ghost?" Johnson : "I hope not. If I did, I should frighten the ghost."—*Boswell.*

Colonel Pennington said Garrick sometimes failed in emphasis ; as, for instance, in "Hamlet :"—

"I will speak *daggers* to her ; but use *none*,"  
instead of

"I will *speak* daggers to her ; but *use* none."—*Ibid.*

Garrick's conversation is gay and grotesque. It is a dish of all sorts, but all good things. There is no solid meat in it ; there is a want of sentiment in it. Not but that he has sentiment sometimes, and sentiment, too, very powerful and very pleasing ; but it has not its full proportion in his conversation.  
—*Johnson.*

Garrick, madam, was no declaimer. There was not one of his scene-shifters who could not have spoken *To Be or not to Be* better than he did ; yet he was the only actor I ever saw whom I could call a master both in tragedy and comedy, though I liked him best in comedy. A true conception of character, and natural expression of it, were his distinguished excellencies. And after all, madam, I thought him less to be envied on the stage than at the head of a table.—*Ibid.*

Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's.—*Wilkes.*

He is but a good mimic.—*H. Walpole.*

His acting I have seen, and may say I see nothing wonderful in it.—*Ibid.*

Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can  
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man ;  
As an actor confess'd without rival to shine ;  
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line. . . .  
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,  
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.

*Goldsmith.*

I have known *one little man* support the theatrical world,  
like a David Atlas, upon his shoulders.—*Sterne.*

The grace of action—the adapted mien,  
Faithful as nature to the varied scene ;  
Th' expressive glance, whose subtle comment draws  
Entranc'd attention and a mute applause ;  
Gestures that mark with force and feeling fraught  
A sense in silence and a will in thought ;  
Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid tone  
Gives verse a music scarce confess'd its own ;

As light from gems assumes a brighter ray  
And cloth'd with orient hues, transcends the day!

*Sheridan.*

You should write your own criticisms. David always did.—  
*Mrs. Garrick.*

If manly sense, if nature link'd with art;  
If thorough knowledge of the human heart;  
If powers of acting vast and unconfin'd;  
If fewest faults with greatest beauties join'd;  
If strong expression, and strange powers which lie  
Within the magic circle of the eye;  
If feelings which few hearts like his can know,  
And which no face so well as his can show;  
Deserve the preference—Garrick, take the chair,  
Nor quit it, till thou place an equal there.—*Churchill.*

When I first beheld little Garrick, then young and light, and alive in every muscle and in every feature, come bounding on the stage and pointing at the wittol Altamont and the heavy-paced Horatio (Heavens! what a transition!), it seemed as if a whole century had been swept over in the space of a single scene; old things were done away and a new order at once brought forward, bright and luminous, and clearly destined to dispel the barbarisms and bigotry of a tasteless age, too long attached to the prejudices of custom, and superstitiously devoted to the illusions of imposing declamation.—*Cumberland.*

Garrick was pure gold, but beat out into thin leaf.—*Boswell.*

That young man never had his equal, and never will have a rival.—*Pope.*

He is the completest little doll of a figure—the prettiest little creature.—*Colley Cibber.*

The Whitfield of the stage.—*Quin.*

David's verses are so bad that if I die first, all I dread is that Garrick will undertake my epitaph.—*Footc.*

Rogers: "Mr. Murphy, sir, you knew Mr. Garrick?"  
Murphy: "Yes, sir, and no man better." Rogers: "Well, sir, what did you think of his acting?" Murphy (after a pause): "Well, sir, *off* the stage he was a mean, sneaking little fellow; but *on* the stage," throwing up his eyes and hands, "Oh! my great God!"—*S. Rogers' "Table Talk."*

I honour you for your repeated endeavours in stemming a torrent of vice and folly. You do it in a station where most

men, I suppose, think you might fairly be dispensed with, from bearing your part in the duty of good citizens, on such a necessary occasion. Nobody but you and Pope ever knew how to preserve the dignity of your respective employments.—*Warburton*.

Shakspeare's page, the flower of poesy,  
 Ere Garrick rose, had charms for every eye :  
 'Twas nature's genuine image wild and grand,  
 The strong-mark'd picture of a master's hand.  
 But when his Garrick, Nature's Pallas, came,  
 The bard's bold painting burst into a flame :  
 Each part new force and vital warmth received,  
 As touch'd by heaven—and all the picture liv'd.

*Mickle.*

To the most eloquent expression of the eye, to the handwriting of the passions on his features, to a sensibility which tears to pieces the hearts of his auditors, to powers so unparalleled, he adds a judgment of the most exquisite accuracy, the fruit of long experience and close observation, by which he observes every gradation and transition of the passions, keeping all under the control of a just dependence and natural consistency. So naturally indeed do the ideas of the poet seem to mix with his own, that he seemed himself to be engaged in a succession of affecting situations, not giving utterance to a speech, but to the instantaneous expression of his feelings, delivered in the most affecting tones of voice, and with gestures that belong only to nature. It was a fiction as delightful as fancy, and as touching as truth. A few nights before I saw him in "Abel Drugger," and had I not seen him in both, I should have thought it as possible for Milton to have written "Hudibras" and Butler "Paradise Lost," as for one man to have played "Hamlet" and "Drugger" with such excellence.—*Hannah More*.

The greatest creature living in every respect.—*Gainsborough*.

Horace Walpole.

1717-1797. •

The faults of Horace Walpole's head and heart are indeed sufficiently glaring. His writings, it is true, rank as high

among the delicacies of intellectual epicures as the Strasburg pies among the dishes described in the "Almanach des Gourmands." But as the *paté-de-foie gras* owes its excellence to the diseases of the wretched animal which furnishes it, and would be good for nothing if it were not made of livers preternaturally swollen, so none but an unhealthy and disorganized mind could have produced such literary luxuries as the works of Walpole. He was, unless we have formed a very erroneous judgment of his character, the most eccentric, the most artificial, the most fastidious, the most capricious of men. His mind was a bundle of inconsistent whims and affectations. His features were covered by mask within mask. When the outer disguise of obvious affectation was removed, you were still as far as ever from seeing the real man. He played innumerable parts and over-acted them all. When he talked misanthropy he out-Timoned Timon ; when he talked philanthropy he left Howard at an immeasurable distance.—*Macaulay.*

His epistolary talents have shown our language to be capable of all the grace and all the charms of the French of Madame de Sévigné.—*Miss Berry.*

Mr. Walpole is spirits of hartshorn.—*Lady Townshend.*

Horace Walpole was an agreeable, lively man ; very affected, always aiming at wit, in which he fell very short of his old friend George Selwyn.—*Lord Ossory.*

His birth was premature, and he was all his life a very slight, feeble, and unmanly figure. He died in 1797. The late publication of his "Memoirs" has lowered his reputation for candour, disinterestedness, and truth ; and they have, by their undisguised and undeniable falsehood and malice, excited a strong impression against the accuracy of his other anecdotal works. His "Letters," too, which are charming in their style and topics, are unhappily tinctured with the same readiness to sacrifice truth to either prejudice or pleasantry.—"*Lady Suffolk's Correspondence.*"

He united the good sense of Fontenelle with the Attic salt and graces of Count Anthony Hamilton.—"*Walpoliana.*"

I made poor Vesey go with me on Saturday to see Mr. Walpole, who has had a long illness. Notwithstanding his sufferings, I never found him so pleasant, so witty, and so entertaining. He said a thousand entertaining things about Florio, but accused me of having imposed on the world by a dedication full of falsehood, meaning the compliment to himself. I

never knew a man suffer pain with such entire patience. This submission is certainly a most valuable part of religion, and yet, alas ! he is not religious. I must, however, do him the justice to say that except the delight he has in teasing me for what he calls over-strictness, I have never heard a sentence from him which savoured of infidelity.—*Hannah More.*

His original vein of playful humour and pleasantry runs through the whole (of his works), but it is mingled with a much larger proportion of profaneness and indelicacy than I should have expected from the casual intercourse and conversation which I have had with him, in which he was always decent and correct. I am sorry to say that he omits no opportunity of burlesquing Scripture, religion, and the clergy.—*Bishop Porteus.*

It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole ; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman ; but to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable "Letters," and of the "Castle of Otranto," he is the *Ultimus Romanorum*, the author of the "Mysterious Mother," a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living author, be he who he may.—*Byron.*

In speaking of the "Castle of Otranto," it may be remarked as a singular coincidence in the life of Walpole, that as he had been the first person to lead the modern public to seek for their architecture in the Gothic style and age, so he also opened the great magazine of the tales of Gothic times to their literature. "The 'Castle of Otranto' is remarkable," observes an eminent critic, "not only for the wild interest of its story, but as the first modern attempt to found a tale of amusing fiction upon the basis of the ancient romances of chivalry."<sup>1</sup>—*Lord Dover.*

Mr. Walpole took no prominent part in public affairs ; but he was eager and active in politics, and, though destitute of ambition, he supplied the want of it by a meddling restlessness of character—a propensity, as he calls it, to faction, and strong dislike to particular persons. His uniform regard for Mr. Conway shows he was not incapable of steady friendship ; but, in general, his attachments, though warm while they lasted, were changeable and uncertain. To share in his antipathies

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Walter Scott.



and resentments was a surer passport to his favour than to participate in his friendships or opinions. His political creed was that of the Whigs of the day, who differed from the Tories and the Jacobites chiefly in their Low Church principles, in their dread and hatred of the Stuarts, and in their attachment to the House of Hanover. In the mind of Mr. Walpole the opinions of his party were mixed up with a sort of speculative republicanism which could lead to no results, and therefore never influenced his conduct, though it sometimes gives a tinge to his reflections. As a public man he was too much governed by his passions; and, though personally disinterested, was too apt, for the accomplishment of his ends, to dip in underhand intrigues and double negotiations. As an historian, his principal merit is the minute description he gives of the characters and motives of the persons with whom he acted; and his chief defect an unjust propensity to satire.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1822.

### Mrs. Carter.

1717–1806.

I am not at all satisfied with the “Life of Mrs. Carter,” nor much pleased with her reviewer. Her biographer, in order to do away the terrors of her piety and learning, has laboured to make her a woman of the world, and produced no less than five letters to prove that she subscribed to a ball; and he respects her fondness for cards as much as if it was her passport to immortality. Every novel-reading miss will now visit the circulating library with a warrant from Mrs. Carter. Mrs. Carter was passionately fond of poetry, yet though she lived and flourished with Pope, Thomson, Gray, Collins, Mason, Churchill, Wartons, Cowper, &c., there is not a single criticism; and though she lived with the learned the book is naked of anecdote. Her opinions of books are confined to Mrs. West’s and Charlotte Smith’s novels. The *mind* is not at all turned inside out. You do not get the least acquainted with her notions. She was my zealous and attached friend and correspondent for near thirty years; I loved dearly her honest, correct heart and highly cultivated mind. We differed just enough in our religious views for the exercise of mutual charity. She was a *Clarkist*. Her calm orderly mind dreaded nothing so much as irregularity: she was therefore most strictly

High Church, and most scrupulously forbore reading any book, however sound and sober, which proceeded from any other quarter. She would on no account have read even Doddridge or Pascal.—*H. More.*

He told us, "I dined yesterday at Mrs. Garrick's with Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Fanny Burney. Three such women are not to be found; I know not where I could find a fourth, except Mrs. Lennox, who is superior to them all."—*Boswell's "Johnson."*

Mrs. Carter truly exemplified the maxim that to be good is to be happy. Happy she certainly was, beyond the race of women. She had several attached brothers and sisters, whose characters and understandings were of the superior class, and who found in her the sagest of counsellors and warmest of friends, while their worldly interests were in many instances advanced by the influence which the extent of her acquirements and talents, and the excellence of her character, had among many powerful and distinguished friends. It was not the least of her high privileges that she appears through life to have been moving in an atmosphere of worth, elegance, and piety. Miss Fanshawe says, in one of her letters to me, written soon after the death of this venerated person, that she appears to her to have been half an angel and half a sage; differing from most of her sex in having laid down a plan in the outset of life to which she adhered steadily to the end, writing Greek in the face of the world without compunction, never losing a friend, and never making an enemy.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

## Hugh Blair.

1718--1800.

I love "Blair's Sermons." Though the dog is a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, and everything he should not be, I was the first to praise them.<sup>1</sup>—*Dr. Johnson.*

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<sup>1</sup> He praised them to some purpose, for on Strahan, the bookseller, sending him one of the sermons for his opinion, Johnson replied, "I have read over Dr. Blair's first sermon with more than approbation; to say it is good is too little." This produced an offer to Blair of 100*l.*, which was accepted; the sale, however, was so great that the bookseller doubled the sum. We are informed that the success of these sermons was unparalleled

The merits of Blair (by far the most popular 'writer of sermons within the last century) are plain good sense, a happy application of Scriptural quotation, and a clear harmonious style, richly tinged with Scriptural language. He generally leaves his readers pleased with his judgment, and his just observations on human conduct, without ever rising so high as to touch the great passions, or kindle any enthusiasm in favour of virtue.—*Sydney Smith.*

With Dr. Blair I am more at my ease. I never respect him with humble veneration; but when he kindly interests himself in my welfare, or still more, when he descends from his pinnacle and meets me on equal ground in conversation, my heart overflows with what is called *liking*. When he neglects me for the mere carcase of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, what do I care for him or his pomp either?—*Robert Burns.*

It is not easy forming an exact judgment of any one; but in my opinion Dr. Blair is merely an astonishing proof what industry and application can do. Natural parts like his are frequently to be met with; his vanity is proverbially known among his acquaintance, but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing; and a critic of the first, the very first, rank in prose; even in poetry, a bard of Nature's making can only take the *pas* of him. He has a heart, not of the very finest water, but far from being an ordinary one. In short, he is truly a worthy and most respectable character.—*Ibid.*

## William Kenrick.

1720—1779.

One of those unhappy persons who, with considerable talents, acquire notice chiefly by offences against good taste and propriety. . . . A love of notoriety, a jealous and perverse temper, increased often to violence by habits of intemperance, led him to assail all who enjoyed reputation, or whose success

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in the history of pulpit literature. They were translated into the principal languages of Europe. Everybody who had money bought them; and, what was more wonderful, everybody who bought them, read them. George III settled 200*l.* a year on Blair.—*Ed.*

excited his envy, often avowedly. . . . A graver charge than envy or jealousy—that of desperate malignity—applies to his conduct in 1772, when, after having long flattered Garrick in order to secure the reception of his pieces on the stage, he turned upon him in consequence of a trifling disagreement with an infamous and unfounded charge connected with the retirement of Isaac Bickerstaff from the country; and when proceedings were commenced against him in the Court of King's Bench, made at once the most abject submission and retraction. When afterwards asked by Evans, the bookseller, how he could bring so infamous a charge against Mr. Garrick, he replied, "He did not believe him guilty, but did it to plague the fellow." The honest bookseller observed, on telling the story, "I desire to add, I never more conversed with such a man."—*James Prior.*

Dreaming of genius which he never had,  
Half wit, half fool, half critic, and half mad;  
Seizing like Shirley on the poet's lyre,  
With all the rage, but not one spark of fire;  
Eager for slaughter and resolved to tear  
From others' brows that wreath he must not wear.  
Next Kenrick came; all furious and replete  
With brandy, malice, pertness, and conceit;  
Unskill'd in classic lore, through envy blind  
To all that's beauteous, learned, or refined,  
For faults alone behold the savage prowl,  
With Reason's offal glut his ravening soul;  
Pleas'd with his prey, its inmost blood he drinks,  
And mumbles, paws, and turns it—till it stinks.—*Shaw.*

Though he certainly was not without considerable merit, he wrote with so little regard to decency, and principles, and decorum, and in so hasty a manner, that his reputation was neither extensive nor lasting.—*Boswell.*

Sir, he is one of the many who have made themselves *public* without making themselves *known*.—*Fohnson.*

I hear you have had the honour to be abused by Kenrick; I think nothing would hurt me so much as such a fellow's praise; I should feel as if I had a blister upon me.—*Langhorne to Hannah More.*

## William Collins.

1720-1756.

Mr. Collins was a man of extensive literature and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. He had employed his mind chiefly on works of fiction and subjects of fancy; and, by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.—*Johnson*.

Collins was an acceptable companion everywhere; and among the gentlemen who loved him for a genius may be reckoned Drs. Armstrong, Barrowby, Hill, Messrs. Quin, Garrick, and Foote, who frequently took his opinion on their pieces before they were seen by the public.—*Anon.*

I have lately finished eight volumes of Johnson's "Prefaces, or Lives of the Poets." In all that number I observe but one man—a poet of no great fame—of whom I did not know that he existed till I found him there, whose mind seems to have had the slightest tincture of religion;<sup>1</sup> and he was hardly in his senses. His name was Collins. He sunk into a state of melancholy and died young. Not long before his death he was found at his lodgings in Islington by his biographer, with the New Testament in his hand. He said to Johnson, "I have but one book, but it is the best." Of him, therefore, there are some hopes. But from the lives of all the rest there is but one inference to be drawn: that poets are a very worthless, wicked set of people.—*Cowper*.

At Chichester tradition has preserved some striking and affecting occurrences of the last days of the unhappy Collins. He would haunt the aisles and cloisters of the Cathedral,

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<sup>1</sup> Surely Cowper when he wrote this had not read the lives of Young, Blackmore, Swift, Watts, Lyttleton, Cowley, Milton, Parnell, and Addison.—*ED.*

roving nights and days together, loving their "dim religious light;" and when the choristers chanted their anthem, the listening and bewildered poet, carried out of himself by the solemn strains and his own too susceptible imagination, moaned and shrieked, and awoke a sadness and terror most affecting in so solemn a place.—*I. D'Israeli.*

Gray's odes are fine, and though somewhat too formal, perhaps, the "Welsh Bard" is full of Greek fire. Some of Mason's choruses are sonorous, and swing along not unmajestically; and Tom Warton caught no small portion of the true lyrical spirit—witness his Kilkerran Castle song. But Collins far surpassed them all, and his odes are all exquisitely beautiful, except his "Ode to Freedom," and it is sublime.—*John Wilson.*

### Mrs. Montagu.

1720–1800.

Mrs. Montagu does not make a trade of her wit; but Mrs. Montagu is a very extraordinary woman; she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated, it has always a meaning.—*Johnson.*

Sir, that lady exerts more *mind* in conversation than any person I ever met with; sir, she displays such powers of ratiocination—such radiations of intellectual excellence as are amazing.—*Ibid.*

This brings to my remembrance the unparalleled eulogium which the late Lord Bath made on Mrs. Montagu (a lady he was intimately acquainted with) in speaking of her to Sir Joshua Reynolds. His lordship said "that he did not believe that there ever was a more perfect human being created, or ever would be created, than Mrs. Montagu." I give the very words I heard from Sir Joshua's mouth; from whom also I heard that he repeated them to Mr. Burke, observing that Lord Bath could not have said more; and "I do not think he said too much," was Mr. Burke's reply.—*Miss Reynolds.*

Mrs. Montagu wants to make up with me again. I daresay she does; but I will not be taken and left even at the pleasure of those who are much nearer and dearer to me than Mrs. Montagu. We want no flash, no flattery. . . . Mrs. Montagu wrote creeping letters when she wanted my help, or foolishly

*thought* she did, and then turned her back upon me, and set her adherents to do the same. I despise such conduct.—*Mrs. Piozzi.*

Mrs. Montagu received me with most encouraging kindness ; she is not only the finest genius, but the finest lady I ever saw ; she lives in the highest style of magnificence ; her apartments and table are in the most splendid taste ; but what baubles are these when speaking of a Montagu ! Her form (for she has no *body*) is delicate even to fragility ; her countenance the most animated in the world ; the sprightly vivacity of fifteen with the judgment and experience of a Nestor. But I fear she is hastening to decay very fast ; her spirits are so active that they must soon wear out the little, frail receptacle that holds them.—*Hannah More.*

She has that look and manner of a woman accustomed to being distinguished, and of great parts.—*Miss Burney.*

Mrs. Montagu's parties were pleasant, no doubt, for she got together the people best worth knowing ; and though she loved flattery and loved to drape and pose herself as the chief muse of a new British Parnassus, she was essentially a gentlewoman, full of kindness and benevolence, standing stoutly up for her friends, and always ready to help unknown and struggling people with her patronage, her advice, and her money.—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

## Bishop Hurd.

1720-1808.

His appearance and air are dignified, placid, grave, and mild, but cold and rather distancing. He is extremely well-bred, nevertheless. . . . Piety and goodness are so marked on his countenance, which is truly a fine one, that he has been named, and very justly, "The Beauty of Holiness." Indeed, in face, manner, demeanour, and conversation, he seems precisely what a bishop should be, and what would make a looker-on, were he not a bishop, and a see vacant, call out, "Take Dr. Hurd ! that is the man !" — "*Diary of Madame D'Arblay.*"

In person Bishop Hurd was below the middle size, of slight make, but well-proportioned, his features not marked, but regular and pleasing, and his whole aspect intelligent, thoughtful, and, in later life, venerable. This idea is fully conveyed in the portraits of him extant, by Gainsborough and others. Although

he reached so advanced an age, his health seems never to have been good ; and notwithstanding his temperate and abstemious mode of living, we find in his letters frequent complaints of his suffering from attacks of gout, dizziness, and lowness of spirits, as well as of languor and indolence arising from these causes. With regard to his intellectual endowments, he had received from nature remarkable clearness of apprehension and accuracy of judgment, great aptitude for methodical arrangement, and that sagacity which is the primary qualification of a critic. He had a peculiar bent for tracing moral effects to their causes, and much ingenuity in inventing hypotheses to account for phenomena. He was also gifted with a keen discrimination of character, and great skill in seizing its salient points.—*Kilvert's "Life of Hurd."*

I shall never forget his appearance. It was as if some statue had

"Stepped from its pedestal to take the air."

He was habited in a brocaded silk morning gown, with a full-dressed wig, stooping forward, and leaning upon what appeared to be a gold-headed cane. His complexion had the transparency of marble ; and his countenance was full of expression, indicative of the setting of that intellectual sun which at its meridian height had shone forth with no ordinary lustre.—*Dr. Dibdin.*

Hurd, sir, is one of a set of men who account for everything systematically ; for instance, it has been a fashion to wear scarlet breeches ; these men would tell you that according to causes and effects no other wear could have been at that time chosen.—*Dr. Johnson.*

The venerable Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, being in the habit of preaching frequently, had observed a poor man remarkably attentive, and made him some little presents. After a while he missed his humble auditor, and meeting him said, "John, how is it that I do not see you in the aisle as usual?" John, with some hesitation, replied, "My lord, I hope you will not be offended, and I will tell you the truth. I went the other day to hear the Methodists ; and I understand their plain words so much better that I have attended them ever since." The Bishop put his hand into his pocket and gave him a guinea, with words to this effect : "God bless you ; go where you can receive the greatest profit to your soul."—" *Life of Lady Huntingdon.*"



I had often the satisfaction of attending this good prelate officially, when he was only Mr. Hurd, in the business of his various learned works, and uniformly experienced the same gratifying affability, which was not lessened by the progressive dignities to which he was advanced. After Mr. Hurd was made a bishop I have frequently been honoured with an invitation to his hospitable dinners. . . . The rich stores of a capacious and highly-cultivated mind were opened with the utmost placidity of manner, and were a never-failing source of instruction and delight.—*Nichols's "Literary Anecdotes."*

From a farmhouse and village school Hurd emerged, the friend of Gray and a circle of distinguished men. While Fellow of a small college he sent out works praised by foreign critics, and not despised by our own scholars. He enriched his understanding by study, and sent from the obscurity of a country village a book, sir, which your royal father is said to have declared made him a bishop. He made himself unpopular in his own profession by the defence of a fantastical system. He had decriers—he had no trumpeters; he was great in and by himself.—*Dr. Parr, in a conversation with the Prince of Wales.*<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop was somewhat too much of a precisian, and there are few flashes of the *mens divini* in his "Dialogues." Moreover, his was "pride that licked the dust" beneath Warburton's feet. . . . Yet true it is and of verity, that we owe to Hurd the vindication of Spenser. Therefore laud to the lawn sleeves, the crozier, the mitre, and the wig, for they came to the rescue of the "Faery Queen."—*Blackwood, 1834.*

## Thomas Sheridan.

1721-1788.

He was the son of Dr. Thomas Sheridan, a profound scholar and eminent schoolmaster, intimately acquainted with Dean Swift and other illustrious writers in the reign of Queen Anne. . . . He was father of the celebrated orator and dramatist Richard Brinsley Sheridan. . . . In the literary world he was distinguished by numerous and useful writings on the pronunciation of the English language. Through some of his opinions ran

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<sup>1</sup> "Life of Parr," vol. i.

a vein of singularity, mingled with the rich ore of genius. In his manners there was dignified ease ; in his spirit invincible firmness ; and in his habits and principles unsullied integrity.—*Dr. Parr.*

His literary labours . . . are chiefly upon subjects connected with education, to the study and profession of which he devoted the latter part of his life. Such dignity, indeed, did his favourite pursuit assume in his own eyes, that he is represented (on the authority of one, however, who was himself a schoolmaster) to have declared that “he would rather see his two sons at the head of respectable academics, than one of them Prime Minister of England, and the other at the head of affairs in Ireland.”—*Moore.*

On Friday (1785) I was invited to a very agreeable party at Mrs. Vesey’s to hear Mr. Sheridan read. He gave us the beautiful but hackneyed “Churchyard Elegy,” “Jessy,” “Dryden’s Ode,” “The Morning Hymn,” and everything that everybody could say by heart. He was sensible, but pedantic as usual. He abused all the English poets, because none of them *had written to the heart*.—*Hannah More.*

Why, sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull ; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, sir, is not in nature. Sheridan cannot bear me. I bring his declamation to a point. I ask him a plain question, “What do you mean to teach?” Besides, sir, what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to show light at Calais.—*Dr. Johnson.*

## William Wilkie.

1721-1772.

Wilkie, with all his learning, could neither read nor spell. I myself was witness to his ignorance of the art of reading. When I was a very young man, residing at Hatton, Wilkie came from St. Andrew’s on a visit to Lord Lauderdale. He stayed a few days, and all the personal knowledge I had of Wilkie was acquired during that time. “The Judgment of Paris,” a poem by Dr. Beattie, was brought to Hatton one of those days, as a new publication. Wilkie asked me to retire

with him, that we might read and criticise the poem<sup>9</sup> together. At first, when he began to read, I imagined that he did not understand the verses at all, as he surely committed the saddest havoc, in point of quantity and pronunciation that can well be imagined, and even miscalled several of his words: and yet his criticisms were so just, and so happily expressed, that I was charmed by the elegance of his taste.—*Professor Dalzel*.

Wherever Wilkie's name happened to be mentioned in a company, learned or unlearned, it was not soon dropped; everybody had much to say.—*Lord Elibank*.

He was a great and an odd man. His character, I venture to say, will never be successfully written, but by a great hand; and even when written, the theory of the man is above common comprehension.—*Adam Smith*.

He was always fond of being in the company of old men and old women. . . . He had read the ancient philosophers and poets very early. Hesiod was a favourite poet of his, and he very often quoted him to persons who knew nothing about him. His conversation was most original and ingenious. It had a mixture of knowledge, acuteness, and singularity, which rendered it peculiarly delightful; and every person who spent an hour with him carried away something he was glad to repeat.—*Anon., quoted by Dalzel*.

I have heard the late Dr. Wallace, author of the "Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind," say, nobody could venture to cope with him. His knowledge in almost all things was deep, solid, and unanswerable. His meaning was plain to a child. In shrewdness, he had no rival. Both his manner and thoughts were masculine in a degree peculiar to himself.—*Dr. Robertson*.

There is nothing more wonderful in this admirable poem (the "Epigoniad") than the intimate acquaintance it displays, not only with human nature, but with the turn and manner of thinking of the ancients, their history, opinions, manners, and customs. There are few books that contain more learning than the "Epigoniad." To the reader acquainted with remote antiquity it yields high entertainment; and we are so far from thinking that an acquaintance with Homer hinders men from reading this poem, that we are of opinion it is chiefly by such as are conversant in the writings of that poet that the "Epigoniad" is or will be read. And as the manners therein described are not founded on any circumstances that are tem-

porary and fugacious, but arise from the original frame and constitution of human nature, and are consequently the same in all nations and periods of the world, it is probable, if the English language shall not undergo very material and sudden changes, that the epic poem of Wilkie will be read and admired when others that are in greater vogue in the present day shall be overlooked and forgotten.—*Dr. Anderson.*

In course of conversation I mentioned an anecdote about Wilkie, the author of the "Epigoniad," who was but a formal poet, but whose conversation was most amusing and full of fancy. Having heard much of him in my family, where he had been very intimate, I went, when quite a lad, to St. Andrew's, where he was a Professor, for the purpose of visiting him. I had scarcely let him know who I was, when he said, "Mr. William, were you ever in this place before?" I said no. "Then, sir, you must go and look at Regulus's Tower—no doubt you will have something of the eye of an architect about you;—walk up to it at an angle, advance and recede until you get to see it at its proper distance, and come back and tell me whether you ever saw anything so beautiful in building. Till I saw that tower and studied it, I thought the beauty of architecture had consisted in curly-wurlies; but now I find it consists in symmetry and proportion."—"Life of Sir W. Scott."

## William Robertson.

1721-1793.

His eloquence was bold and masculine; his diction, which flowed with perfect ease, resembled that of his writings; but of course became suited to the exigencies of extemporaneous speech. He had the happy faculty of conveying an argument in a statement, and would more than half answer his adversary by describing his propositions and his reasonings.—*Lord Brougham.*

The perfect composition, the nervous language, the well-turned periods of Dr. Robertson, inflamed me to the ambitious hope that I might one day tread in his footsteps.—*Gibbon.*

You must look upon Robertson's work as romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his history. Now

Robertson might have put twice as much into his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool; the wool takes up more room than the gold.—*Johnson*.

We are tempted to think we have before us rather the orator, ambitious of displaying his eloquence, than the simple narrator of past events. He falls likewise into the error of occasionally making speeches for his characters, a practice which, if countenanced by antiquity, is scarcely desirable in a modern writer.—*James Prior*.

A disciple of the old school of slander—a liar—and one for whom bedlam is no bedlam.—*Whitaker*.

Robertson's histories may be worth your running over. There is a deal of prate in them, according to the Scotch way of writing history, and indeed everything else. His civility to Gibbon and Raynal makes me suspect his religion to be of a piece with that of his friend Hume.—*Bishop Hurd*.

## Mark Akenside.

1721-1770.

Akenside was a superior poet both to Gray and Mason.—*Dr. Johnson*.

If he had left lyric composition to Gray and Collins, and had employed his powers in grave and elevated satire, he might have disputed the pre-eminence of Dryden.—*Macaulay*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yet neither Gray nor Collins has written anything finer than the "Ode to Lord Huntingdon." The "Epistle to Curio," which Macaulay particularly commends, has high and distinctive merits, and in parts rivals Dryden's strength and Pope's sweetness. But Akenside in a no lesser degree asserts his genius in many of his lyrics. Take this passage:—

Yet hence barbaric zeal  
His memory with unholy rage pursues,  
While from these arduous cares of public weal  
She bids each bard be gone and rest him with his Muse.  
O Fool! to think the man whose ample mind  
Must grasp at all that yonder stars survey,  
Must join the noblest forms of ev'ry kind,  
• The world's most perfect image to display,  
Can e'er his country's majesty behold  
Unmov'd or cold:  
O Fool! to deem  
That he whose thought must visit every theme,

Akenside's distinguished poem is his "Pleasures of Imagination;" but, for my part, I never could admire it so much as most people do.—*Boswell*.

I am of opinion that there is now living a poet of as genuine a genius as this kingdom ever produced, Shakspeare alone excepted. . . . The poet I allude to is Dr. Akenside.—*Cooper*, "*On Taste*."

We cannot but regard it ("Pleasures of Imagination") as a noble and beautiful poem, exhibiting many bright displays of genius and fancy, and holding out sublime views of Nature, Providence, and Morality.—*Biographia Britannica*.

The bard of Tyne—his master hand  
Awakes new music o'er the land;  
And much his voice of right and wrong  
Attempts to teach th' unheeding throng.

*John Scott.*

By turns he was placid, irritable, simple, affected, gracious, haughty, magnanimous, mean, benevolent, harsh, and sometimes even brutal. At times he was marked by a child-like docility, and at other times his vanity and arrogance displayed him almost as a madman. Of plebeian extraction he was ashamed of his origin, and yet was throughout life the champion of popular interests. Of his real humanity there can be no doubt, and yet in his demeanour to the unfortunate creatures whom, in his capacity as a hospital-physician, he had to attend, he was always supercilious and often cruel.—*Feaffreson*.

Akenside has committed the same violations in *verse* which Johnson has in *prose*.—*I. D'Israeli*.

There is another of these tame geniuses, a Mr. Akenside, who writes odes; in one he has lately published, he says, "Light the tapers, urge the fire." Had not you rather make gods jostle in the dark than light the candles for fear that they should break their heads?—*Horace Walpole*.

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Whose heart must every strong emotion know,  
Inspir'd by Nature, or by Fortune taught—  
That he, if haply some presumptuous foe,  
With false ignoble science fraught,  
Shall spurn at Freedom's faithful band,  
That he their dear defence will shun,  
Or hide their glories from the sun,  
Or deal their vengeance with a woman's hand.—*ED.*

Him, whose muse  
Now builds the lofty rhyme, and nobly wild,  
Crops each unfading flower from Pindar's brow,  
To form fresh garlands for the Naiad train.

*W. Whitehead.*<sup>1</sup>

Akenside, in his "Hymn to the Naiads," presents us with forms truly antique, but the spirit of life is not in them. He imitates the ancients rather than catches their inspiration, and the repast which he lays before us, however grand, is served up cold.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1850.

## Tobias Smollett.

1721-1771.

The person of Smollett was eminently handsome, his features prepossessing . . . and his conversation in the highest degree instructive and amusing. Of his disposition those who have read his works (and who has not?) may form a very accurate estimate; for in each of them he has presented, and sometimes under various points of view, the leading features of his own character, without disguising the most unfavourable of them.—*Sir W. Scott*.

Perhaps no book ever written excited such peals of inextinguishable laughter as Smollett's.—*Ibid.*<sup>2</sup>

You see somehow he is a gentleman, through all his battling and struggling, his poverty, his hard-fought successes, and his defeats.—*Thackeray*.

Smollett, with genius fitted for almost any department of literature, seems never to have aimed at adding the character of essayist to that of historian, novelist, and critic; nor was the

<sup>1</sup> William Whitehead was born 1714. His verses were so highly esteemed that in 1757 he became poet-laureate. He had the ill-luck, however, to provoke the ridicule of Churchill, whose satire so lowered his reputation as a poet that Garrick declined to produce a tragedy of his. He was the friend of Gray and of Mason, whose memoir of Whitehead exhibits a great kindness for him. He is represented as a blameless, easy, good-natured man, without power as a poet, but not without talent as a dramatist. He died 1785.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> "The novel of 'Humphrey Clinker,'" wrote Thackeray, "is, I do think, the most laughable story that has ever been written since the goodly art of novel-writing began."

bent of his mind quite fitted for it perhaps by nature. His touch was bold, but frequently coarse; his personages drawn with something of caricature; his humour broad; his wit, descriptions, and incidents sometimes licentious and even indecent; his satire shrewd, sarcastic, and often bitter, exhibiting more of the spirit of Juvenal than Horace.—*James Prior.*

The Doctor was a man of genius, but he certainly rated it to its full value. He was one, too, who abounded in generosity and good nature, but was at the same time extremely splenetic and revengeful.—*Thomas Davies.*

## Samuel Foote.

1721-1777.

This is the nephew of the gentleman who was lately hung in chains for murdering his brother.—*Cooke.*

Foote's mimicry was exquisitely ludicrous, but it was all caricature. He could take off only some strange peculiarity, a stammer or lisp, a Northumbrian burr, or an Irish brogue, a stoop or a shuffle. "If a man," said Johnson, "hops on one leg, Foote can hop on one leg."—*Macaulay.*

The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible."—*Johnson.*

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added, "A merry-andrew, a buffoon." Johnson: "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree: that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range of wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is some-



times mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free."—*Boswell*.<sup>1</sup>

In 1775, having gathered abroad some scandalous anecdotes of the Duchess of Kingston, he wrote a farce, entitled "The Trip to Calais," in which that notorious woman was grossly caricatured, under the name of "Lady Kitty Crocodile." The attack was cruel, because the Duchess was in the midst of her embarrassments relating to the trial of bigamy; and she had sufficient influence with the Lord Chamberlain to obtain a refusal to allow it to be acted. Foote expostulated in vain with the Lord Chamberlain, and then threatened the Duchess he would print the farce unless she gave him two thousand pounds to suppress it. The haughty dame entered into a war of letters with him, and showed that she was no match for caustic satire; but there is a certain brutality in his way of trampling on an

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<sup>1</sup> Boswell reports an amusing conversation: "BOSWELL: 'Foote has a great deal of humour.' JOHNSON: 'Yes, sir.' BOSWELL: 'He has a singular talent of exhibiting character.' JOHNSON: 'Sir, it is not a talent, it is a vice: it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers; it is farce which exhibits individuals.' BOSWELL: 'Did not he think of exhibiting you, sir?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off.' BOSWELL: 'Pray, sir, is not Foote an infidel?' JOHNSON: 'I do not know, sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject.' BOSWELL: 'I suppose, sir, he has thought superficially, and seized the first notions which occurred to his mind.' JOHNSON: 'Why, then, sir, still he is like a dog, that snatches the piece next him. Did you never observe that dogs have not the power of comparing? A dog will take a small piece of meat as readily as a large, when both are before him.'" Boswell adds the following note: "When Mr. Foote was at Edinburgh he thought fit to entertain a numerous Scotch company with a great deal of coarse jocularity at the expense of Dr. Johnson, imagining it would be acceptable. I felt this as not civil to me, but sat very patiently till he had exhausted his merriment on that subject; and then observed that surely Johnson must be allowed to have some sterling wit, and that I had heard him say a very good thing of Mr. Foote himself. 'Ah! my old friend Sam!' cried Foote, 'no man says better things; do let us have it.' Upon which I told the above story, which produced a very loud laugh from the company. But I never saw Foote so disconcerted. He looked grave and angry, and entered into a serious refutation of the justice of the remark. 'What, sir!' said he, 'talk thus of a man of liberal education—a man who for years was at the University of Oxford—a man who has added sixteen new characters to the drama of his country!'"

unfortunate woman which makes us feel how pernicious to society a character like Foote's must ever be. A Rev. Mr. Jackson . . . . was the Duchess's agent in her transaction with Foote. The latter, finding he was likely to get nothing out of the Duchess of Kingston, altered the name of his farce to the "Capuchin," omitted all that related to the Duchess, but brought in her agent, the parson. Jackson (it was said, at the instigation of the Duchess of Kingston) revenged himself by charging Foote with a revolting offence; and although honourably acquitted, the disgrace bore so heavy upon his mind, that he never recovered it.—*Wright*.

By turns transform'd into all kinds of shapes,  
Constant to none, Foote laughs, cries, struts and scrapes:  
Now in the centre, now in van or rear,  
The Proteus shifts, bawd, parson, auctioneer,  
His strokes of humour, and his bursts of sport,  
Are all contain'd in this one word, Distort.—*Churchill*.

Mad wag! who pardon'd none, nor spared the best,  
And turned some very serious things to jest.  
Nor Church nor State escaped his public sneers,  
Arms, nor the gown, priests, lawyers, volunteers;  
"Alas! poor Yorick!" now for ever mute;  
Whoever loves a laugh must sigh for Foote.—*Byron*.

Foote was by far the better scholar of the two (*i.e.*, better than Garrick), and to this superiority he added also a good taste, a warm imagination, a strong turn for mimicry, and a constant fresh supply of extensive occasional reading from the best authors of all descriptions. Though he was not deficient in paying his respects to men of rank and fashion, he never sought them with any kind of unbecoming eagerness, or made the least distinction at his table between them and the obscurest guest. When that table, too, was all in a roar, as it usually was, he never stopped the career of his *bons-mots* out of respect to persons; it as readily struck a noble duke as a poor player.—*Cooke*.

Foote was certainly a great and fertile genius, superior to that of any writer of the age; his dramatic pieces were most of them, it is true, unfinished, and several of them little more than sketches; but they are the sketches of a master, of one who, if he had laboured more assiduously, could have brought them nearer to perfection. Foote saw the follies and vices of man-

kind with a quick and discerning eye ; his discrimination of characters was quick and exact ; his humour pleasant, his ridicule keen. his satire pungent, and his wit brilliant and exuberant. He described with fidelity the changeable follies and fashions of the times ; and his pieces, like those of Ben Jonson, were calculated to please the audience of the day ; and for this reason posterity will scarcely know anything of them.—*Thomas Davies.*

He was every sort of actor, sir : he took his colour, tone, and feeling from the person he acted with. The mimicking propensity was so strong in him that he was always approximating to the manners of the man, woman, or child opposite to him. Had he been left alone with a bear, in a quarter of an hour he'd have been upon all-fours, and longing for a muzzle.—*Tate Wilkinson.*

## Thomas Blacklock.

1721-1791.

His poems are very extraordinary productions.—*Southey.*

As an author, under disadvantages which seem unsurmountable to nature, Blacklock has eminently distinguished himself. Though blind from his infancy, the impulse of curiosity and the vigorous exertion of his talents conducted him to uncommon knowledge. He acquired tongues and arts by the ear, in many of which he excelled. There was no science with which he was not acquainted ; he was familiar with the learned languages, and he knew with accuracy those of modern Europe that are the most cultivated. Among philosophers he has attained a conspicuous rank. . . . As a poet, though not of the highest rank, he is entitled to a rank not inferior to Addison, Parnell, and Shenstone.—*Dr. Anderson.*

All those who ever acted as his amanuenses agree in this rapidity and ardour of composition which Mr. Jameson ascribes to him. He never could dictate till he stood up ; and as his blindness made walking about without assistance inconvenient or dangerous to him, he fell insensibly into a sort of vibratory motion of his body, which increased as he warmed with his subject and was pleased with the conceptions of his mind. This motion at last became habitual to him, and though he could sometimes restrain it when on ceremony or in any public

appearance, such as preaching, he felt a certain uneasiness from the effort, and always returned to it when he could indulge it without impropriety. This is the appearance which he describes in the ludicrous picture he has drawn of himself.—*Henry Mackenzie*.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Blacklock one day, harassed by the censures of the populace, whereby not only his reputation but his very subsistence was endangered, and fatigued with mental exertion, fell asleep after dinner. Some hours after he was called upon by a friend, answered his salutation, rose and went with him into the dining-room, where some of his companions were met. He joined with two of them in a concert, singing as usual with taste and elegance, without missing a note or forgetting a word; he then went to supper and drank a glass or two of wine. His friends, however, observed him to be a little absent and inattentive; by-and-by he began to speak to himself, but in so slow and confused a manner as to be unintelligible. At last being pretty forcibly roused, he awoke with a sudden start, unconscious of all that had happened, as till then he had continued fast asleep. . . . No one will suspect either the judgment or veracity of Dr. Blacklock. All who knew him bear testimony to his judgment; his fame rests on a better foundation than fictitious narratives; no man delights in or more strictly adheres on all points to the truth.—*Dr. Clegghorn*.

He (Johnson) talked of Blacklock's poetry so far as it was descriptive of visible objects; and observed "that as its author had the misfortune to be blind, we may be absolutely sure that such passages are combinations of what he

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Mackenzie, "the amiable and ingenious author of the 'Man of Feeling,'" as he is almost invariably termed by his contemporaries, seems to have entertained a high notion of Blacklock's poetical genius: "his poems," says he, "breathe the purest spirit of piety, virtue, and benevolence," and liberally applies to him the epithets "elegance," "beauty," "force," "spirit," and "originality." The truth is, Blacklock has neither beauty nor force, neither spirit nor originality. But he is undoubtedly "elegant" in the sense that Pope is elegant. The lines referred to by Mackenzie are these:—

Yet though my person fearless may be seen,  
There is some danger in my graceful mien;  
For as some vessel, toss'd by wind and tide,  
Sounds o'er the waves and rocks from side to side,  
In just vibration thus I always move.—ED.

has remembered of the works of other authors who could see. That foolish fellow, Spence, has laboured to explain philosophically how Blacklock may have done, by means of his own faculties, what it is impossible he should do. The solution, as I have given it, is plain. Suppose I know a man to be so lame that he is absolutely incapable to move himself, and I find him in a different room from that in which I left him, shall I puzzle myself with idle conjectures that perhaps his nerves have by some unknown change all at once become effective? No, sir; it is clear how he got into a different room; he was *carried*."—*Boswell's "Johnson."*

He was the worthiest and kindest of human beings, and particularly delighted in encouraging the pursuits and opening the minds of the young people by whom he was surrounded. I, though at the period of our intimacy, a very young boy, was fortunate enough to attract his notice and kindness; and if I have been at all successful in the paths of literary pursuit, I am sure I owe much of the success to the books with which he supplied me, and his own instructions.—*Sir W. Scott.*

There never was, perhaps, one among all mankind whom men might have more truly called an angel upon earth than Dr. Blacklock. He was guileless and innocent as a child, yet endowed with manly sagacity and penetration. His heart was a perpetual spring of benignity. His feelings were all tremblingly alive to the sense of the sublime, the beautiful, the tender, the pious, the virtuous. Poetry to him was the dear solace of perpetual blindness.—*James Hogg.*

## Christopher Smart.

1722-1770.

Johnson: "Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart showed the disturbance of his mind by falling upon his knees and saying his prayers in the street or in any other unusual place. Now, although rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question." Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, he had at another time the following conversation with Dr. Burney:—Burney: "How does

poor Smart do, sir ; is he likely to recover?" Johnson : " It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease ; for he grows fat upon it." Burney : " Perhaps, sir, that may be from want of exercise." Johnson : " No, sir ; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement he used for exercise to walk to the alehouse ; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him ; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was that he did not love clean linen ; and I have no passion for it."—*Boswell's "Life of Johnson."*

In the first rank of the elegant writers of Latin, among our English poets, Jonson, May, Crashaw, Cowley, Milton, Marvell, Addison, Gray, Warton, &c., Smart stands very high.—*Anderson.*

As a poet his genius has never been questioned by those who censured his carelessness, and commiserated the unhappy vacillation of his mind. He is sometimes not only greatly irregular, but irregularly great. His errors are those of a bold and daring spirit, which bravely hazards what a vulgar mind could never suggest. Shakspeare and Milton are sometimes wild and irregular ; but it seems as if originality alone could try experiments. Accuracy is timid and seeks for authority. Fowls of feeble wing seldom quit the ground, though at full liberty, while the eagle unrestrained soars into unknown regions.—*Ibid.*

There are men who write because they have wit ; there are those who write because they are hungry ; . . . of the first one sees an instance in Fielding ; Smart, with equal right, stands foremost among the second.—*Sir John Hill.*

The late Christopher Smart is said to have written poems at four years of age. His "Song to David" has been justly deemed a wonder in the moral world, and deserving as much the investigation of the philosophers as the admiration of the lover of poetry ; and yet this poem was composed while the unfortunate bard was confined to a madhouse ; and in the absence of pen, ink, and paper, which were denied him, was written on the walls of his room with a key. It is a sublime production, and glows with religious fervour.—*'Percy Anecdotes.'*

## Sir Joshua Reynolds.

1723-1792.

His admirable "Discourses" contain such a body of just criticism, clothed in such perspicuous, elegant, and nervous language, that it is no exaggerated panegyric to assert that they will last as long as the English language, and contribute, not less than the productions of his pencil, to render his name immortal.

—*Northcote.*

The idol of every company.—*Hannah More.*

His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand,  
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland;  
Still born to improve us in every part,  
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart;  
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,  
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing;  
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,  
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.—*Goldsmith.*

There was something singular in the style and economy of Sir Joshua's table that contributed to pleasantry and good humour; a coarse, inelegant plenty, without any regard to order and arrangement. A table prepared for seven or eight was often compelled to contain fifteen or sixteen. When this pressing difficulty was got over, a deficiency of knives, plates, forks, and glasses succeeded. The attendance was in the same style, and it was absolutely necessary to call instantly for beer, bread, or wine, that you might be supplied with them before the first course was over. He was once prevailed on to furnish the table with decanters and glasses at dinner, to save time and prevent the tardy manœuvres of two or three occasional undisciplined domestics. As these accelerating utensils were demolished in the course of service, Sir Joshua would never be persuaded to replace them. But these trifling embarrassments only served to enhance the hilarity and singular pleasure of the entertainment. The wines, cookery, and dishes were but little attended to; nor was the fish or venison ever talked of or recommended. Amidst this convivial, animated bustle among his guests, our host sat perfectly composed; always attentive to what was said, never minding what was eat or drunk, but left every one at perfect liberty to scramble for himself. Temporal

and spiritual peers, physicians, lawyers, actors, and musicians composed the motley group, and played their parts without dissonance or discord.—*Courtney*.

I have been informed by Sir Thomas Lawrence, his admirer and rival, that in 1787 his (Sir Joshua's) prices were two hundred guineas for the whole length, one hundred for the half-length, seventy for the kit-cat, and fifty for what is called the three-quarters. But even on these prices some increase must have been made, as Horace Walpole said, "Sir Joshua in his old age became avaricious. He had one thousand guineas for my picture of the three Ladies Waldegrave."—*J. W. Croker*.

Of Reynolds all good should be said, and no harm ;  
 Tho' the heart is too frigid, the pencil too warm.  
 Yet each fault from his converse we still must disclaim,  
 As his temper 'tis peaceful, and pure as his fame ;  
 Nothing in it o'erflows, nothing ever is wanting,  
 It nor chills like his kindness, nor glows like his painting.  
 When Johnson by strength overpowers our mind,  
 When Montagu dazzles, and Burke strikes us blind,  
 To Reynolds well pleas'd for relief we must run,  
 Rejoice in his shadow, and shrink from the sun.

*Mad. Piozzi.*

The most invulnerable man I know ; whom, if I should quarrel with him, I should find the most difficulty how to abuse him.—*Johnson*.

Sir Joshua was always thinking of his art. He was one day walking with Dr. Lawrence, near Beaconsfield, when they met a beautiful little peasant boy. Sir Joshua, after looking earnestly at the child, exclaimed, "I must go home and deepen the colouring of my *Infant Hercules*." The boy was a good deal sunburnt.—*Rogers*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Rogers's "Table Talk" I find the following : "I can hardly believe what was told to me a long time ago by a gentleman living in the Temple, who, however, assured me that it was a fact. He happened to be passing by Sir Joshua's house in Leicester Square, when he saw a poor girl seated on the steps, and crying bitterly. He asked what was the matter ; and she replied that she was crying 'because the *one shilling* which she had received from Sir Joshua for sitting to him as a model had proved to be a bad one, and he would not give her another.'" Sir Joshua has not yet been successfully vindicated from the charge of *meanness in small things*, which has been repeatedly brought against him. —ED.



They (the "Discourses") are subdued, mild, unaffected, thoughtful—containing sensible observations, on which he laid too little stress, and vague theories which he was not able to master. There is the same character of mind in what he wrote, as of eye in what he painted. His style is gentle, flowing, and bland; there is an inefficient outline, with a mellow, felicitous, and delightful filling up. In both the taste predominates over the genius; the manner over the matter! The real groundwork of Sir Joshua's "Discourses" is to be found in Richardson's "Essays."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1820.

During the whole course of his long and large practice it may safely be said that neither the mind nor hand of Reynolds ever slept or stood still. He never fell into dead-alive routine or mindless repetition. He always painted with keen relish, was ever alive to beauty and character, never unobservant—though often strangely ignorant—of the chemical and mechanical workings of his materials, and ready to record on the instant any fresh impressions. "Stop!" he said to a lady, as, turning from his easel on her entrance into his painting room, he saw a striking effect of half-shadow on the face from the flat Woffington hat intercepting the high light of the studio window. And as she stood just beyond the doorway, her face half light, half shadow, he had put a clean canvas on the easel, and was rapidly laying in the masses of the portrait.—*C. R. Leslie*.

## Adam Smith.

1723-1790.

Smith was a man of extraordinary application, and had his mind crowded with all manner of subjects. . . . He had book-making so much in his thoughts, and was so chary of what might be turned to account in that way, that he once said to Sir Joshua Reynolds that he made it a rule when in company never to talk of what he understood. Beauclerk had for a short time a high opinion of Smith's conversation; Garrick, after listening to him awhile, as to one of whom his expectations had been raised, turned slyly to a friend and whispered to him, "What say you to this, eh? Flabby, I think."—*Boswell*.

Mr. Boswell has chosen to omit, for reasons which will be presently obvious, that Johnson and Adam Smith met at Glasgow; but I have been assured by Professor John Miller that

they did so, and that Smith, leaving the party in which he had met Johnson, happened to come to another company where Miller was. Knowing that Smith had been in Johnson's society, they were anxious to know what had passed, and the more so as Dr. Smith's temper seemed much ruffled. At first Smith would only answer "He's a brute—he's a brute!" but on closer examination it appeared that Johnson no sooner saw Smith than he attacked him for some point of his famous letter on the death of Hume. Smith vindicated the truth of his statement. "What did Johnson say?" was the universal inquiry. "Why, he said," replied Smith, with the deepest impression of resentment, "he said, *you lie!*" "And what did you reply?" "I said, you are a son of a ——!" On such terms did these two great moralists meet and part, and such was the classical dialogue between the two great teachers of philosophy.<sup>1</sup>  
—*Sir W. Scott.*

He (Wilkie) considered Dr. Smith as a superior genius to Mr. Hume. He possessed, in his opinion, equal learning, and greater originality and invention; for, what may appear strange, he by no means considered Mr. Hume as an original or inventive genius.—*Anderson's "Life of Wilkie."*

When I first saw Smith he was at breakfast, eating strawberries, and he descanted on the superior flavour of those grown in Scotland. I found him very kind and communicative. He was (what Robertson was not) a man who had seen a great deal of the world. Once, in the course of conversation, I happened to remark of some writer that "he was rather superficial—a Voltaire." "Sir," cried Smith, striking the table with his hand, "there has been but *one* Voltaire."—*Sam. Rogers, "Table Talk."*

The practical usefulness of Dr. Smith's work is undoubtedly no longer what it was. The principles which he advocated with such force of reasoning and illustration have, to a great extent, passed into axioms in political science, and form the general basis of commercial legislation in Europe. Nothing more strongly shows the advance of those principles than the mode in which the application of them to any particular subject-matter is still resisted by those who have an interest in opposing it.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Croker contradicts this anecdote (Boswell's "Life of Johnson"). But Scott has been vindicated and his assertion substantiated by some pungent comments in the *Edinburgh Review*.—Ed.

Instead of condemning them in the lump, as heretofore, the anti-free-trade reasoner is now almost always employed in discovering ingenious reasons for making this or that species of industry an exception to the common rule ; and although it is often complained, with justice, that economical science has had, as yet, very imperfect results, because the advance of governments towards liberal systems of *external* trade is so precarious and interrupted, yet we are apt to forget how great a mass of far more oppressive restrictions on domestic commerce and the rights of industry have been removed in almost every part of Europe since the appearance of Dr. Smith's "Essay"—a great work of which no one has so much right as he to enjoy the honour.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1840.

Adam Smith, by the publication of one solitary work, contributed more towards the happiness of man than has been effected by the united abilities of all the statesmen and legislators of whom history has preserved an authentic account.—*H. T. Buckle*.

An indirect application was made to me to furnish a set of notes for a new edition of Smith's "Wealth of Nations;" this, of course, I declined, because I had other things to attend to. Even if I had been prepared for such an undertaking, which I certainly am not yet, I should be reluctant to expose Smith's errors before his work has operated its full effect. We owe much at present to the superstitious worship of Smith's name ; and we must not impair that feeling until the victory is more complete. Until we can give a correct and precise theory of the nature and origin of wealth, his popular, and plausible, and loose hypothesis is as good for the vulgar as any other.—*Francis Horner*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Horner was amongst the earliest contributors to the *Edinburgh Review*. He is represented as a man of genius, and his immature death provoked an expression of tender regret from individuals of every shade of opinion. He was born 1778, and died 1817. Sydney Smith, in describing his appearance, says, "There was something very remarkable in his countenance ; the commandments were written on his face, and I have often told him there was not a crime he might not commit with impunity, as no judge or jury who saw him would give the smallest degree of credit to any evidence against him. There was in his look a calm settled love of all that was honourable and good—an air of sweetness and of wisdom ; you saw at once that he was a great man, whom nature had intended for a leader of human beings."—*ED*.

## Christopher Anstey.

1724-1805.

There is a new thing published that will make you split your cheeks with laughter. It is called "The New Bath Guide." It stole into the world, and for a fortnight no soul looked into it, concluding its name was its true name. No such thing. It is a set of letters in verse, describing the life at Bath, and, incidentally, everything else; but so much wit, so much humour, fun, and poetry, never met together before. I can say it by heart, and if I had time would write it you down, for it is not yet reprinted, and not one to be had.—*Horace Walpole*.

Have you read "The New Bath Guide?" It is the only thing in fashion, and is a new and original kind of humour. Miss Prue's conversation, I doubt, you will paste down, as a certain Yorkshire baronet did before he carried it to his daughters; yet I remember you all read "Crazy Tales" without pasting.—*Gray*.

Originally a country gentleman from Cambridgeshire, gout and a numerous family had driven this poetaster from his life of rural occupation to these then fashionable watering-places (Bath and Cheltenham), and there he long flourished, visible at every gay assembly in his tie wig, single-breasted and laced coat, with point-lace ends to his lawn cravat, his laced white satin waistcoat, and his small cocked hat, trimmed with gold lace, under his arm.—*Grace Wharton*.

I have had a great deal of conversation with Mr. Anstey. I found him obliging and polite, but he is one of those poets who are better to read than to see. I think him a real genius in the way of wit and humour; but he appears to be of a shy and silent cast, and to prefer the quiet solemnity of a whist-table to talking parties.—*Hannah More*.

## Dr. Burney.

1726-1814.

He belonged in fortune and station to the middle class. . . . His mind though not very powerful or capacious, was restlessly active, and, in the intervals of his professional pursuits, he had

contrived to lay up much miscellaneous information. His attainments, the suavity of his temper, and the gentle simplicity of his manners, had obtained for him ready admission into the first literary circles.—*Macaulay*.

He was a man of very uncommon attainments; wit born with him, I suppose; learning he had helped himself to, and was proud of the possession; elegance of manners he had so cultivated that those who knew but little of the *man*, fancied he had great flexibility of mind. It was mere pliancy of body, however, and a perpetual show of obsequiousness by bowing incessantly, as if *acknowledging* an inferiority which nothing would have forced him to *confess*.—*Madame Piozzi*.

## John Wilkes.

1727–1797.

He was a man of taste, reading, and engaging manners. His sprightly conversation was the delight of green rooms and taverns, and pleased even grave readers when he was sufficiently under restraint to abstain from detailing the particulars of his amours, and from breaking jests on the New Testament. His expensive debaucheries forced him to have recourse to the Jews. He was soon a ruined man, and determined to try his chance as a political adventurer. In Parliament he did not succeed. His speaking, though pert, was feeble, and by no means interested his hearers so much as to make them forget his face, which was so hideous that the caricaturists were forced in their own despite to flatter him. As a writer he made a better figure.—*Macaulay*.

I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked.—*Johnson*.

Did we not hear so much of Jack Wilkes, we should think more highly of his conversation. Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman.—*Ibid*.

Then Satan answer'd, "There are many:  
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any."

A merry cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite,  
Upon the instant started from the throng,  
Dressed in a fashion now forgotten quite ;  
For all the fashions of the flesh stick long,  
By people in the next world ; where unite  
All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,  
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat  
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.—*Byron.*

Johnny Wilkes, Johnny Wilkes,  
Thou greatest of bilks,  
How chang'd are the notes you now sing !  
Your fam'd Forty-five  
Is Prerogative,  
And your blasphemy, " God save the King !" — *Sheridan.*

Beholding the foremost,  
Him by the cast of his eye oblique, I knew as the firebrand  
Whom the unthinking populace held for their idol and hero,  
Lord of Misrule in his day. But how was that countenance  
alter'd  
Where emotion of fear or of shame had never been witness'd :  
That invincible forehead abash'd ; and those eyes wherein  
malice

Once had been wont to shine with wit and hilarity temper'd,  
Into how deep a gloom their mournful expression had settled !  
Little avail'd it now that not from a purpose malignant,  
Not with evil intent he had chosen the service of evil ;  
But of his own desires the slave, with profligate impulse,  
Solely by selfishness moved, and reckless of aught that  
might follow.

Could he plead in only excuse a confession of baseness ?

*Southey.*

He was quite as ugly and squinted as much as his portraits  
make him ; but he was very gentlemanly in appearance and man-  
ners. I think I see him at this moment, walking through the  
crowded streets of the City, as Chamberlain, on his way to  
Guildhall, in a scarlet coat, military boots, and a bag-wig, the  
hackney coachmen in vain calling out to him, " A coach, your  
honour ? " — *Sam. Rogers.*

Wilkes was one of the most fascinating companions that  
ever sat over a bottle. When in the House of Commons he  
has frequently detained gentlemen of adverse politics from the

House by his wit and humour, merely to prevent them voting on some question in which he felt himself interested ; and so attractive was his society that it was difficult for any person to tear himself from it ; indeed, wit was so constantly at his command, that wagers have been gained that from the time he quitted his house near Storey's Gate, till he reached Guildhall, no one would speak to him who would leave him without a smile or a hearty laugh. Although Earl Sandwich was in continual political hostility to Wilkes, no man was more sensible of his convivial qualities. When Mr. Charles Butler, who, in an appointment with his Lordship, was behind his time, apologized by saying he had dined with Mr. Wilkes, "Well," said his Lordship, "the fascination of Wilkes has made me break appointments so often that it is but fair he should make a person break his appointment with me for once."—"*Percy Anecdotes*."

The eyes have a portentous squint ; the lips wear a Mephistophelic grin, and yet there is a charm in the acuteness and humour of the physiognomy, in spite of the uneasy, sidelong, glancing look, as of one who fears pursuers. It is Wilkes . . . the intriguing though determined demagogue, whose wit, good humour, and keen observation of human weakness and follies were all needed to reconcile his decent friends to his coarseness and ridicule of most things respectable or venerable.—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

The history of Wilkes is well known, and his general character is no longer any matter of controversy. Indeed, it is only justice towards him to remark that there was so little about him of hypocrisy—the "homage due from vice to virtue" being by him paid as reluctantly and sparingly as any of his other debts—that even while in the height of his popularity, hardly any doubt hung over his real habits and dispositions. About liberty, for which he cared little, and would willingly have sacrificed less, he made a loud and blustering outcry, which was only his way of driving his trade ; but to purity of private life, even to its decencies, he certainly made no pretence ; and during the time of the mob's idolatry of his name, there never existed any belief in his good character as a man, however much his partizans might be deceived in their notion that he was unlikely to sell them.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1839.

I scarcely ever met with a better companion ; he has inexhaustible spirits, infinite wit and humour, and a great deal of

knowledge. . . . a thorough profligate in principle as in practice ; his life stained with every vice, and his conversation full of blasphemy and indecency. These morals he glories in ; for shame is a weakness he has long since surmounted.—*Gibbon*.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Wilkes was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the best scholar I ever knew.—*Lord Mansfield*.

## Dr. Thomas Percy.

1728–1811.

Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of “*Sir Cauline*,” and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the “*Hermit of Warkworth*,” a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguished from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated.—*Wordsworth*.

Percy’s “*Reliques*” are the most agreeable selection, perhaps, which exists in any language.—*Ellis*.

He is a man very willing to learn and very able to teach ; a man out of whose company I never go without having learned something. It is true that he vexes me sometimes, but I am afraid it is by his making me feel my own ignorance. So much extension of mind, and so much minute accuracy of inquiry, if you survey your whole circle of acquaintance, you will find so scarce, if you find it at all, that you will value Percy by comparison.—*Fohnson*.

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<sup>1</sup> His wit was indeed great ; but for the most part unfit to repeat. Many of his *mots* have been fathered on contemporary or later wits, and the very best thing he ever said,—his famous retort to Lord Sandwich’s brutal and indecent question, I have seen quoted in French and ascribed to Mirabeau.—*Ed*.



At an early period he evinced that strong love of letters which furnishes presumptive evidence of an ingenious mind, and which, though it may lead to no distinction, gives its possessor a favourable place in the estimation of the liberal classes of society. In the country, in addition to his proper duties, and as one of the most honourable means of aiding in support of a young family, he devoted himself to literary pursuits. These were of a varied character—being projected editions of the Earl of Surrey's, and Villiers, Duke of Buckingham's, Poems; the *Spectator* and *Guardian*, with notes; "Han Kion Chuan," a Chinese romance; fine pieces of Runic poetry, translated from the Icelandic; the "Song of Solomon," newly translated from the Hebrew; a "Key to the New Testament;" and his chief and well-known work, in three volumes octavo, the "Reliques," already mentioned, a curious and valuable publication, which rescued from obscurity or utter oblivion a variety of pieces honourable to the ancient poetical genius of our country. He produced likewise the "Northumberland Household Book," and a translation of Mallet's "Northern Antiquities;" he was the author of "The Hermit of Warkworth," of the popular song of "O Nanny, wilt thou gang wi' me?" and of several detached pieces of poetry.—*James Prior*.

### Oliver Goldsmith.

1728—1774.

In all the numerous accounts of his virtues and foibles, his genius and absurdities, his knowledge of nature and ignorance of the world, his "compassion for another's woe" was always predominant.—*Geo. Colman, Jun.*

Think of him reckless, thoughtless, vain, if you like—but merciful, gentle, generous, full of love and pity. His humour delighting us still; his song fresh and beautiful as when first he charmed with it; his words in all our mouths; his very weaknesses beloved and familiar: his benevolent spirit seems still to smile on us; to do gentle kindnesses; to succour with sweet charity; to soothe, caress, and forgive; to plead with the fortunate for the unhappy and the poor.—*Thackeray*.

He was very much what the French call an *étourdi*, and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly, without knowing of the

subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the gentleman.—*Boswell*.<sup>1</sup>

No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had.—*Johnson*.

For shortness call'd Noll,  
Who wrote like an angel, and talk'd like poor Poll.<sup>2</sup>

*Garrick.*

<sup>1</sup> The one circumstance in Boswell's life which has been more insisted upon than any other as exhibiting the peculiar littleness of his mind, was his jealousy of Goldsmith. Whatever the cause of this jealousy may have been, we may be sure that it was a contemptible one. Yet in common justice to Boswell, it must be said that in spite of the paltry personal feeling that obtrudes upon his remarks, not only is the portrait of Goldsmith in many points remarkable for its accuracy, but that contrasted with the portraits of him that have survived their writers it is comparatively indulgent. It implies, I trust, no want of great admiration for the genius, no want of high veneration for the many noble qualities which distinguished the character of that great man, to say that in numerous respects Goldsmith was almost as anomalous a being as Boswell. He was despised by his colleagues in the club. He was jeered at in whatever society he entered. In conversation he was dull. Boswell has indeed vindicated his talking powers, and recorded one or two humorous remarks. But his wit shines palely in the general blaze of the colloquists by whom he is surrounded. Of no man who has left so great a reputation, who was possessed of so much wit, who had in so eminent a degree the power to delight, is there so little testimony to his genius to be found outside his books. Though conscious of his own incapacity for conversation, he persisted in talking and blundering. He had little literature, yet his vanity was too great to allow him to disguise his ignorance. He argued when he had no facts; he doubted where there was no room for disbelief; he affirmed where he had not the means to prove. His generosity was attributed to vanity; and even vanity, his friends thought, was too moderate a term to apply to a quality which rendered a man unjust to many that he might gain the applause of a few. Nor was his poetry allowed to be altogether his: for his associates at the club regarded Johnson not only as the mender, but in many of the best passages the maker of "The Traveller." When read by the light of contemporary opinion, Boswell's character of Goldsmith will not seem so unjust.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> What Garrick thought of Goldsmith may be also gathered from the following lines:—

"Here, Hermes, says Jove, who with nectar was mellow,  
Go fetch me some clay,—I will make an odd fellow;  
Right and wrong shall be jumbled—much gold and some dross,  
Without cause be he pleased, without cause be he cross;  
Be sure as I work to throw in contradictions,  
**A great love of truth, yet a mind turned to fictions;**

An inspired idiot.<sup>1</sup>—*Horace Walpole.*

Of all solemn coxcombs, Goldsmith is the first ; yet sensible, —but affects to use Johnson's hard words in conversation.—*Dr. Warton.*

There was in his character much to love, but little to respect. His heart was soft even to weakness ; he was so generous that he quite forgot to be just ; he forgave injuries so readily that he might be said to invite them ; and was so liberal to beggars

Now mix these ingredients, which warm'd in the baking,  
 Turn'd to *learning* and *gaming*, *religion* and *raking*.  
 With the love of a wench, let his writings be chaste ;  
 Tip his tongue with strange matter, his pen with fine taste ;  
 That the rake and the poet o'er all may prevail,  
 Set fire to the head and set fire to the tail ;  
 For the joy of each sex on the world I'll bestow it,  
 This scholar, rake, christian, dupe, gamester, and poet,  
 Though a mixture so odd he shall merit great fame,  
 And among brother mortals be Goldsmith his name ;  
 When on earth this strange meteor no more shall appear,  
 You, *Hermes*, shall fetch him—to make us sport here."

As a companion to this I will quote Judge Day's portrait of him as communicated in a letter to Mr. Prior :—"In person he was short, about five feet five or six inches ; strong, but not heavy in make ; rather fair in complexion, with brown hair, such at least as could be distinguished from his wig ; his features were plain but not repulsive—certainly not so when lighted up by conversation. His manners were simple, natural, and, perhaps, on the whole, we might say not polished, at least without that refinement and good breeding which the exquisite polish of his compositions would lead us to expect. He was always cheerful and animated, often indeed boisterous in his mirth ; entered with spirit into convivial society ; contributed largely to its enjoyments by solidity of information and the *naïveté* and originality of his character ; talked often without premeditation, and laughed loudly without restraint."—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Walpole was not less accurate in his judgment of Goldsmith's character than in his opinion of Goldsmith's play : it is in this manner that this most ingenious cynic (who exhibited amazing erudition on the subject of the Rowley Poems, after he had been *crammed* by his friends, Gray, Mason, and Warton) writes of "She Stoops to Conquer :"—"What play makes you laugh very much, and yet is a very wretched comedy? Dr. Goldsmith's 'She Stoops to Conquer.' Stoops, indeed !—so she does, that is, the muse ; she is dragged up to the knees, and has trudged, I believe, from Southwark fair. The whole view of the piece is low humour, and no humour is in it. All the merit is in the situations, which are comic ; the heroine has no more modesty than Lady Bridget, and the author's wit is as much *manqué* as the lady's ; but some of the characters are well acted, and Woodward speaks a poor prologue, written by Garrick, admirably.

that he had nothing left for his tailor and his butcher. He was vain, sensual, frivolous, profuse, improvident. One vice of a darker shade was imputed to him, envy.—*Macaulay*.

A mere literary drudge, equal to the task of compiling and translating; but little capable of original, and still less of poetical composition.—*Hawkins*.

He was a friend to virtue, and in his most playful pages never forgets what is due to it. A gentleness, delicacy, and purity of feeling distinguish whatever he wrote, and bear a correspondence to the generosity of a disposition which knew no bounds but his last guinea.—*Sir W. Scott*.

He seems from infancy to have been compounded of two natures, one bright, the other blundering, or to have fairy gifts laid in his cradle by the "good people" who haunted his birth-place, the old goblin mansion on the banks of the Inny.—*Washington Irving*.

He hardly knew an ass from a mule, nor a turkey from a goose, but when he saw it on the table.—*R. Cumberland*.

Goldsmith could not be termed a thinker; but everything he touched he brightened, as after a month of dry weather the shower brightens the dusty shrubbery of a suburban villa.—*Alexander Smith*.

From our Goldsmith's anomalous character, who  
Can withhold his contempt, and his reverence too?  
From a poet so polished, so paltry a fellow!  
From critic, historian, or vile Punchinello!  
From a heart in which meanness had made her abode  
From a foot that each path of vulgarity trod;  
From a head to invent, and a hand to adorn,  
Unskill'd in the schools, a philosopher born.  
By disguise undefended, by jealousy smit,  
This *lusus naturæ*, nondescript in wit,  
May best be compared to those Anamorphoses  
Which for lectures to ladies th' optician proposes.

*Mad. Piozzi.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The verses by Madame Piozzi on Goldsmith, Garrick, Reynolds, and Burke are quoted from a set of stanzas (including portraits of Lyttleton, Johnson, Lord Sandys, Murphy, Baretti, and Chambers) which were suggested to Madame Piozzi by the various pictures painted by Reynolds in the library at Streatham. Mr., Mrs., and Miss Thrale were also there,

The most delightful man was Goldsmith. She (Mrs. Gwatkin) saw him and Garrick keeping an immense party laughing till they shrieked. Garrick sat on Goldsmith's knee, a table-cloth was pinned under Garrick's chin, and brought behind Goldsmith, hiding both their figures. Garrick then spoke in his finest style Hamlet's speech to his father's ghost. Goldsmith put out his hands on each side of the cloth, and made burlesque action—tapping his heart, and putting his hand to Garrick's head and nose, all at the wrong time.—*B. R. Haydon.*

He paints the peculiarities of mankind minutely, yet with ease and freedom of hand, as if the task of observing and detailing cost him no effort. With all the tenderness of a fellow-mortal conscious of the operation of human passions and frailties within himself, he was willing to be gentle yet corrective in dealing with those of others; and this, perhaps, forms one of his claims to what Johnson has called him in the epitaph, "*lenis dominator.*"—*James Prior.*

His elegant and enchanting style flowed from him with so much facility that in whole quires of his histories, "*Animated Nature,*" &c., he had seldom occasion to correct or alter a single word.—*Bishop Percy.*

When Goldsmith entered a room, sir, people who did not

and the portrait of Dr. Burney was afterwards added. Madame Piozzi thus commented on her own portrait :—

In these features so placid, so cool, so serene,  
What trace of the wit or the Welshwoman's seen?  
What trace of the tender, the rough, the refin'd,  
The soul in which such contrarieties join'd !  
Where, tho' merriment loves over method to rule,  
Religion resides and the virtues keep school.  
Till when tir'd we condemn her dogmatical air,  
Like a rocket she rises and leaves us to stare !  
To such contradictions d'ye wish for a clue ?  
Keep vanity still, that vile passion, in view,  
For 'tis thus the slow minor his fortune to make,  
Of arsenic thus scatter'd pursues the pale track,  
Secure where that poison pollutes the rich ground  
That it points to the place where some silver is found.

The pictures were sold by auction in 1816. The portrait of Mrs. Piozzi and her daughter fetched 81*l.* 18*s.* ; Goldsmith, 133*l.* 7*s.* ; Reynolds, 128*l.* 2*s.* ; Garrick, 138*l.* 15*s.* ; Burney, 84*l.* ; Burke, 252*l.* ; Johnson, 378*l.* &c.—*ED.*

know him became for a moment silent, from awe of his literary reputation ; when he came out again they were riding on his back.—*Northcote.*

His prose may be regarded as the model of perfection, and the standard of our language.—*Dr. Anderson.*

There is something in Goldsmith's prose that, to my ear, is uncommonly sweet and melodious ; it is clear, simple, easy to be understood. We never want to read his period over except for the pleasure it bestows ; obscurity never calls us back to a repetition of it.—*R. Cumberland.*

The wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied ; he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice, and he accomplished his task in a manner that raises him to the highest rank among British authors.—*Sir W. Scott.*

His descriptions and sentiments have the pure zest of nature. He is refined without false delicacy, and correct without insipidity. Perhaps there is an intellectual composure in his manner which may in some passages be said to approach to the reserved and prosaic, but he unbends from this graver strain of reflection to tenderness, and even to playfulness, with an ease and grace almost exclusively his own, and connects extensive views of the happiness and interests of society with pictures of life that touch the heart by their unfamiliarity.—*Thomas Campbell.*

The Doctor was a perfect heteroclit, an inexplicable existence in creation ; such a compound of absurdity, envy, and malice, contrasted with the opposite virtues of kindness, generosity and benevolence, that he might be said to consist of two distinct souls, and to be influenced by the agency of a good and bad spirit.—*Thomas Davies, "Life of Garrick."*

The other day Goldsmith dined here. It was the first time I ever saw him. I had before told Sir Joshua and Miss Reynolds that I had a great curiosity to see him ; and when I came into the room the first word Sir Joshua said to me was, "This is Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Northcote, whom you so much wished to see. Why did you desire to see him ?" The suddenness of the question rather confused me, and I replied, "Because he is a notable man." This, in one sense of the word, was so unlike his character, that Sir Joshua laughed heartily, and said he should in future always be called "the notable man," but what I meant was, a man of note or eminence. He seems an unaffected and most good-natured

man, but knows very little about pictures, as he often confesses, with a laugh.—*Northcote*.

That man is a poet.—*Gray*.

## Edmund Burke.

1730-1797.

I admire his eloquence, I approve his politics, I adore his chivalry, and I can almost excuse his reverence for Church establishments.—*Gibbon*, "*Memoirs*."

Burke, sir, is such a man that if you met him for the first time in the street where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that when you parted, you'd say, "This is an extraordinary man."—*Johnson*.

The variety of his allusions and splendour of his imagery have made such an impression on all the rest of the world, that superficial observers are apt to overlook his other merits, and to suppose that *wit* is his chief and most prominent excellence; when, in fact, it is only one of the many talents that he possesses, which are so various and extraordinary that it is very difficult to ascertain precisely the rank and value of each.—*Malone*.

Burke was a damned wrong-headed fellow, through his whole life jealous and obstinate.—*Fox*.

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such  
We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much;  
Who born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,  
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.  
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,  
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote;  
Who too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing while they thought of dining.  
*Goldsmith.*

Though I think him the greatest man upon the earth, yet in politics I think him—what he has been found to the sorrow of those who act with him.—*Dr. Parr*.

There was Burke, ignorant indeed, or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and style to the capacity and taste of his hearers; but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination, superior to every orator ancient or modern.—*Macaulay*.

See Burke's bright intelligence beam from his face,  
 To his language gives splendour, his actions gives grace ;  
 Let us list to the learning that tongue can display,  
 Let it steal all reflection, all reason away ;  
 Lest home to his house we the patriot pursue,  
 Where scenes of another sort rise to our view.

*Madame Piozzi.*

His mind was like an over-decorated chapel, filled with gauds and shows and badly assorted ornaments.—*J. P. Curran.*

The greatest philosopher in practice whom the world ever saw.—*Sir J. Mackintosh.*

Talked of Burke ; agreed in enthusiastic admiration of his talents. Lord L(ansdowne) inclined to defend his latter doctrines, and to look upon them as not so inconsistent with his former ones as they are generally represented ; particularly as there was nothing impeachable in his character throughout life that could lead one to suspect him of interested motives in changing, though certainly his receiving the pension at the time was rather a suspicious coincidence. On my reminding him, however, of some circumstances in Burke's life, the money he received from Lord Rockingham, &c., &c., he seemed rather to surrender this favourable view of the matter.—*Thomas Moore's "Diary."*

You always went from Burke with your mind filled ; from Fox with your feelings excited ; and from Pitt with wonder at his having had the power to make the worse appear the better reason.—*Wordsworth.*<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Burke, in spite of his great talents and zeal, was by no means popular. There was a tone of dictatorship in his public demeanour against which men naturally rebelled ; and the impetuosity and passion with which he flung himself into every favourite subject, showed a want of self-government but little calculated to inspire respect. Even his eloquence, various and splendid as it was, failed in general to win or command the attention of his hearers . . . there was a something—which those who have but read him can with difficulty conceive—that marred the impression of his most sublime and glowing displays. In vain did his genius put forth its most superb plumage,

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<sup>1</sup> This was said by Wordsworth to Moore, and is quoted by Moore in his "Diary."



glittering all over with the hundred eyes of fancy—the gait of the bird was heavy and awkward, and its voice seemed rather to scare than attract.—*T. Moore.*

One of the first of Englishmen, and, in the energy and capacity of his mind, one of the greatest of human beings.—*Crabbe.*

When posterity read the speeches of Burke they will hardly be able to believe that during his lifetime he was not considered as a first-rate speaker ; not even as a second-rate one.—*Sheridan.*

Burke always disappointed me as a speaker. I have heard him, during his speeches in the House, make use of the most vulgar expressions, such as “three nips of a straw,” “three skips of a louse,” &c. ; and on one occasion when I was present he introduced an indelicate story of a French king who asked a physician why his natural children were so much finer than his legitimate.—*Malby.*

Burke became at last such an enthusiastic admirer of kingly power, that he could not have slept comfortably on his pillow, if he had not thought that the king had a right to carry it from under his head.—*Grattan.*<sup>1</sup>

How much soever men may differ as to the soundness of Mr. Burke's doctrine, or the purity of his public conduct, there can be no hesitation in according to him a station among the most extraordinary men that have ever appeared ; and we think there is now but little diversity of opinion as to the kind of place which it is fit to assign him. He was a writer of the first class, and excelled in almost every kind of prose composition. Possessed of much extensive knowledge, and of the most various description ; acquainted alike with what different classes of men knew, each in his own province, and with much that hardly any one ever thought of learning ; he could either bring his masses of information to bear directly upon the subjects to which they severally belonged—or he could avail himself of them generally to strengthen his faculties and enlarge his views—or he could turn any portion of them to account, for the purpose of illustrating his theme or enriching his diction. Hence, when he is handling any one matter, we

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<sup>1</sup> It has been said that Irishmen find it harder to speak well of one another than to speak the truth. Even when they find nothing to censure, they praise so faintly that it is worse perhaps than downright damning. Of Burke, the greatest of Irishmen, it will be found that the few who speak in dispraise are Irish.—*Ed.*



tude of words, Cicero, on the like occasion, would have used as many, only he would have put them together in a better method and in a purer style.—*Bishop Hurd.*

Burke, in passing through Lichfield, had gone with a friend to look at the cathedral while his horses were changing. One of the clergy, seeing two gentlemen somewhat at a loss in this vast building, politely volunteered as their cicerone. The conversation flowed, and he was speedily struck with surprise at the knowledge and brilliancy of one of the strangers. In his subsequent account of the adventure to some friend, who met him hastening along the street, "I have been conversing" said he, "for this half-hour with a man of the most extraordinary powers of mind and extent of information which it has ever been my fortune to meet, and I am now going to the inn to ascertain, if possible, who the stranger is." That stranger had completely overlaid the cicerone, even in his local knowledge. On every topic which came before them, whether the architecture, history, remains, income, learning of the ancient ornaments of the chapter, persecutions, lives, and achievements, the stranger was boundless in anecdote and illustration. The clergyman's surprise was fully accounted for by being told at the inn that this singular companion was Mr. Burke.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1833.

## John Scott.

1730–1783.

Mr. Scott of Amwell's "Elegies" were lying in the room. Dr. Johnson observed, "They are very well; but such as twenty people might write."<sup>1</sup> Upon this I took occasion to controvert Horace's maxim:

— Mediocribus esse poetis  
Non Dī, non homines, non concessere columnæ;

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson, however, thought well enough of Scott to meditate writing his life. He wrote to Barclay: "As I have made some advances towards recovery, and loved Scott, I am willing to do justice to his memory. You will be pleased to get what account you can of his life, with dates, where they can be had; and when I return we will contrive how our materials can be best employed." His death frustrated his intention.—*Ed.*

for here (I observed) was a very middle-rate poet who pleased many readers, and therefore poetry of a middle sort was entitled to some esteem. . . . I declared myself not satisfied. "Why, then, sir," said he, "you and Horace must settle it."—*Boswell.*

In his person he was tall and slender, but his limbs were remarkably strong and muscular; he was very active, and delighted much in walking; his countenance was cheerful and animated. The active member of society, the public-spirited man, and contemplative student were all united in Scott. He was not only a lover and cultivator of polite literature; but though not used to any profession, was no idle member of the community.—*Hoole.*

His compositions are characterized by elegance, simplicity, and harmony, more than by invention or sublimity, neither of which is wanting. They breathe a spirit of tenderness and philanthropy, and display an amiable and virtuous mind. In natural enthusiasm and fire they are by no means deficient.—*Dr. Anderson.*

## William Falconer.

1730–1769.

Many of his descriptions are not inferior to the "*Æneid*," many passages in the third and fifth books of which our author has had in view; they have not suffered by his imitation; and his pilot appears to much greater advantage than the Palinurus of Virgil.—*Monthly Review.*

In his person he was about five feet seven inches in height; of a thin light make, with a dark weather-beaten complexion, and rather what is termed hard-featured, being considerably marked with the small-pox; his hair was of a brownish hue. In point of address his manner was blunt, awkward, and forbidding; but he spoke with great fluency; and his simple yet impressive diction was couched in words which reminded his hearers of the terseness of Swift. Though Falconer possessed a warm and friendly disposition, he was fond of controversy and inclined to satire. . . . He often assured Governor Hunter that his education had been confined merely to reading English, writing, and a little arithmetic.—*James Stanier Clarke.*

Farewell, poor Falconer ! when the dark sea  
 Bursts like despair, I shall remember thee ;  
 Nor ever from the sounding beach depart  
 Without thy music stealing on my heart.  
 And thinking still I hear dread Ocean say,  
 Thou hast declared my might, be thou my prey !  
W. L. Bowles.

With the single exception of Falconer's "Shipwreck," it would be in vain to look for any rhymed poem of that age and of equal extent which is held in equal estimation with the works of Young, Thomson, Glover, Somerville, Dyer, Akenside, and Armstrong.—*Southey*.

Falconer's "Shipwreck" is a most ingenious performance—and affecting, not only in itself, there being in it not a few passages of the simplest human pathetic, but for the sake of the seaman who composed it on many a midnight watch, and perished in the *Apollo* frigate when she went down with all her crew "far, far at sea." Yet 'tis little read, I suspect ; and has inspired no kindred but superior strain through more than half a century.—*Professor Wilson*, "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*."

## William Cowper.

1731-1800.

That maniacal Calvinist and coddled poet.—*Byron*.

"The Task," incomparably the best poem that any Englishmen then living had produced—a poem, too, which could hardly fail to excite in a well-constituted mind a feeling of esteem and compassion for the poet, a man of genius and virtue, whose means were scanty, and whom the most cruel of the calamities incident to humanity had made incapable of supporting himself by vigorous and sustained exertion.—*Macaulay*.

If there is a good man on earth, it is William Cowper.—*Lord Thurlow*.

The poet of the Cross.—*Dr. Memes*.

But tho' in darkness he remained  
 Unconscious of the guiding,  
 And things provided came without  
 The sweet sense of providing,

He testified this solemn truth  
Through frenzy desolated,—  
Nor man nor nature satisfy  
Whom only God created.—*E. B. Browning.*

Mr. Cowper, a man of real genius, has miserably failed in his blank-verse translation (of Homer).—*Boswell.*

The translation (of Homer) is the nearest portrait of Homer, and the more one reads it the better it seems.—*J. W. Croker.*

Cowper's comic vein burst out from a ground of ghastly and maddening bigotry.—*C. Ollier.*

With more than painter's fancy, blest with lays  
Holy as saints to heav'n expiring raise.—*Matthias.*

I have always considered the letters of Mr. Cowper as the finest specimen of the epistolary stile in our language. . . . To an air of inimitable ease and carelessness they unite a high degree of correctness, such as could result only from the clearest intellect, combined with the most finished taste. . . . In my humble opinion the study of Cowper's prose may, on this account, be as useful in forming the taste of young people as his poetry.—*Robert Hall.*

Whatever faults I may be chargeable with as a poet I cannot accuse myself of negligence. I never suffered a line to pass till I had made it as good as I could ; and though my doctrines may offend this king of critics (Dr. Johnson), he will not, I flatter myself, be disgusted with slovenly inaccuracy, either in the numbers, rhymes, or language.—*W. Cowper.*

I am enchanted with this poet ; his images are so natural and so much his own ! Such an original and philosophic thinker ! such genuine Christianity ! and such a divine simplicity ! but very rambling, and the order not very lucid. He seems to put down every thought as it arises, and never to retrench or alter anything.—*Hannah More.*

He is entitled in our estimation to still greater praise ; and that is, to the praise of absolute and entire originality. Whatever he added to the resources of English poetry was drawn directly from the fountains of his own genius, or the stores of his own observation. He was a copyist of no style—a restorer of no style ; and did not, like the eminent men who succeeded him, merely recall the age to the treasures it had forgotten.—*Edinburgh Review, 1828.*

We talked much of Cowper. The truth respecting that

extraordinary genius is, that he was a lunatic of the melancholy kind, with occasional lucid intervals. Johnny<sup>1</sup> said that Cowper firmly believed that good and evil spirits haunted his couch every night, and that the influence of the last generally prevailed. For the last five years of his life a perpetual gloom hung over him—he was never observed to smile. I asked Johnny whether he suspected the people about him of bad intentions (which seems to me the Shibboleth of insanity), and he said that he very often did. “For instance,” observed he, “he said there were two Johnnies; one the real man, the other an evil spirit in his shape; and when he came out of his room in the morning, he used to look me full in the face inquiringly, and turn off with a look of benevolence or anguish, as he thought me a man or a devil!” He had dreadful stomach complaints, and drank immense quantities of tea. He was indulged in everything, even in his wildest imaginations. It would have been better had he been regulated in all respects.—*Dr. Currie to W. Roscoe.*

Cowper is certainly the sweetest of our didactic poets. He is elevated in his “Table Talk;” acute in detailing the “Progress of Error;” and he chants the praises of “Truth” in more dulcet notes than were ever sounded by the fairest swan in Cayster. His “Expostulation” is made in the tones of a benevolent sage. His “Hope” and his “Charity” are proofs of his pure Christian-like feeling,—a feeling which also pervades his “Conversation” and his “Retirement,” and which bars the shafts of his satire without taking away from their strength.—*Dr. Doran, “Habits and Men.”*

Cowper may be fancifully looked on as a morning star which heralded another sunrise, in the dim evening of which new day we now meditate on the past and hope for the future.—*Quarterly Review*, 1849.

Had his health of mind and body—frail and awfully uncertain—suffered him to mingle more with the poor, he had not been their greatest poet in power, but their best in spirit. As it was, all his tenderest, deepest, holiest sympathies were theirs.—*Blackwood’s Magazine*, 1834.

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Dr. Johnson.

## Charles Churchill.

1731-1764.

Wilkes's toad-echo.—*Hogarth.*

Churchill had strength of thought, had power to paint,  
 Nor felt from principles the least restraint.  
 From hell itself his characters he drew,  
 And christened them by every name he knew.

*W. Whitehead.*

Next Churchill came—his face proclaim'd a heart  
 That scorn'd to wear the smooth address of art ;  
 Strongly mark'd out that firm unconquer'd soul  
 Which nought on earth could bias or control.—*Shaw.*

Of Churchill we may say without hesitation that he was a man of genius, and of a temper firm and undaunted ; often led away by pleasure, but at times strenuously active. His thoughts issued from him with ease, rapidity, and vigour. In three or four years he wrote above a dozen large poems, amidst all the dissipations of a gay, unthinking life.—*T. Davies.*

He talked very contemptuously of Churchill's poetry, observing, "That it had a temporary currency, only from its audacity of abuse, and being filled with living names, and that it would sink into oblivion." I ventured to hint that he was not quite a fair judge, as Churchill had attacked him violently. Johnson : "Nay, sir, I am a very fair judge. He did not attack me violently till he found I did not like his poetry ; and his attack on me shall not prevent me from continuing to say what I think of him, from an apprehension that it may be ascribed to resentment. No, sir, I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still. However, I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion of him now than I once had ; for he has shown more fertility than I expected. To be sure he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit ; he only bears crabs. But, sir, a tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few."—*Boswell.*

No more he'll sit in foremost row before the astonished pit ;  
 in brawn Oldmixon's rival as in wit ; and grin dislike, and kiss  
 the spike ; and giggle and wriggle ; and fiddle and diddle ; and  
 fiddle-fuddle, and diddle-daddle.—*Arthur Murphy.*



department he was of a secondary class—in none had he originality. He was one of Johnson's Literary Club, and therefore could render himself amusing by speaking of a past age of authors and of eminent men. He was a most fulsome and incontinent flatterer of those who courted him.—*Sir Egerton Brydges*.

## Dr. Priestley.

1733–1804.

Give me leave to convey to your ear the almost unanimous and not offensive wish of the philosophic world :—that you would confine your talents and industry to those sciences in which real and useful improvements *can* be made. Remember the end of your predecessor Servetus, not of his life (the Calvins of our days are restrained from the use of the same fiery arguments), but I mean, the end of his reputation. His theological writings are lost in oblivion ; and if his book on the Trinity be still preserved, it is only because it contains the first rudiments of the discovery of the circulation of the blood.—*Gibbon*.

Of Dr. Priestley's theological works, he said that they tended to unsettle everything, and yet settled nothing.—*Johnson*.

I was intimately acquainted with Dr. Priestley, and a more amiable man never lived ; he was all gentleness, kindness, and humility. He was once dining with me when some one asked him (rather rudely) "how many books he had published?" He replied, "Many more, sir, than I should like to read.—*Samuel Rogers*.

Lo ! Priestley there, patriot, and saint, and sage,  
Him, full of years, from his loved native land  
Statesmen bloodstained, and priests idolatrous,  
By dark lies maddening the blind multitude,  
Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying, he retired,  
And mused expectant on these promised years.

*Coleridge*.

The various discoveries and researches of Dr. Priestley form a storehouse of facts which contemporary chemists of great eminence, such as Kirwin and Watt, were accustomed to refer to as a common stock from whence to deduce the bases of their theories and reasonings.—*Quarterly Review*, 1846.

The fame and the science of Priestley procured from the

Christian world a forbearance and complaisance to which he was ill entitled.—*Robert Hall.*

Priestley's nonsense is not to be wondered at ; but his impertinence in sending it to me, and calling upon me to read it, shews him to be out of his head. I suppose he was fool enough to think I would dispute with him, as poor Bryant did ; but in this he will be mistaken.—*Bishop Hurd.*

It is true as you say, I have not been curious enough to read Priestley ; and I do not so much as know the title of his book. All I do know is, that he is a wretched coxcomb, and of a virulent spirit.—*Ibid.*

A man frenzied for novelty, ambitious of a name, precipitate in the publication of every change of a capricious mind, and utterly careless of the mischief effected by his unprincipled notoriety. As a scholar shallow, as a philosopher empirical, as a politician malecontent, and as a religionist heretical—he has long since sunk into the contempt which every man of sense feels for pretensions without solidity, and the desire of public mischief defeated only by giddy impotence of mind. But he was fitted for the time. His affectation of universal knowledge, his restless versatility of pursuits, his rash eagerness to be always foremost in the public eye, and his notorious heresy made him invaluable to the half-philosophical, half-political, and more than half irreligious conspiracy, which followed with willing hearts, but still with tottering and unpractised steps, the strides of the gigantic treasons of France. Priestley's whole religious life was change, and change of the most total, irreconcilable, and irrational abruptness.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1835.

## William Julius Mickle.

1734–1788.

It is impossible for me not to approve of the verses of the translator of the “*Lusiad*,” which, without flattery, in my poor opinion, are equal, if not superior, to Pope's translation of the “*Iliad*.”—*Lord Rodney.*

He was in every point of view a man of the utmost integrity, warm in his friendship, and indignant only against vice, irreligion, or meanness. The compliment paid by Lord Lyttleton to Thomson might be applied to him with the strictest truth :

not a line is to be found in his works which, dying, he could wish to blot.—*European Magazine.*

The character of Mickle as a poet ranks very high among his countrymen. His versification is undoubtedly very vigorous and manly ; but certainly not equally remarkable for correctness. It unites the freedom of Dryden with the force and harmony of Pope.—*Dr. Anderson.*

His translation of the "Lusiad" is still in some repute ; and his ballad of "Cumnor Hall" suggested "Kenilworth" to Scott, but his other works are almost all forgotten.—*Croker.*

Crowe knew Mickle, who was a compositor for the press ; thinks a poem of Mickle's called "Sir Martin," equal to Beattie's "Minstrel."—*T. Moore.*

Poor Mickle, to whom we are indebted for so beautiful a version of Camoens' "Lusiad," having dedicated this work, the continued labour of five years, to a certain lord, had the mortification to find, by the discovery of a friend, that he had kept it in his possession three weeks before he could collect sufficient intellectual desire to cut open the first pages.—*I. D'Israeli.*

He (C. J. Fox) had never been able to read Mickle's "Lusiad" through. He once met Mickle, and took a dislike to him.—*Samuel Rogers.*

## Isaac Bickerstaff.

1735-1787.

Then Bickerstaff advanc'd,  
His sing-song Muse by vast success enhanc'd ;  
Who, when fair Wright, destroying reason's fence,  
Inveigles our applause in spite of sense ;  
With syren voice our juster rage confounds,  
And clothes sweet nonsense in delusive sounds,  
Pertly commends the judgment of the town,  
And arrogates the merit as his own ;  
Talks of his taste ! how well each air was hit !  
While printers and their devils praise his wit.—*Shaw.*

Isaac Bickerstaff, a native of Ireland, the author of "Love in a Village," "Lionel and Clarissa," the "Spoiled Child," and several other theatrical pieces of great merit and continued popularity. This unhappy man was obliged to fly the country

on suspicion of a capital crime, on which occasion Mrs. Piozzi relates that "when Mr. Bickerstaff's flight confirmed the report of his guilt, and Mr. Thrale said, in answer to Johnson's astonishment, that he had long been a suspected man, 'By those who look close to the ground dirt will be seen, sir,' was the lofty reply; 'I hope I see things from a greater distance.'" —*J. W. Croker.*

### Dr. Beattie.

1735-1803.

A poet, a philosopher, and a good man.—*Gray.*

We all love Beattie.—*Johnson.*

In him, at least, I shall find a man whose faculties have now and then a glimpse from Heaven upon them; a man not indeed in possession of much evangelical light, but faithful to what he has, and never neglecting an opportunity to use it. How much more respectable such a character than that of thousands, who would call him blind, and yet have not the grace to practise half his virtues! He, too, is a poet, and wrote the "Minstrel." The specimens which I have seen of it pleased me much.—*William Cowper.*

I remember taking Beattie's "Minstrel" down from my father's shelves, on a fine summer evening, and reading it for the first time with such delight! It still charms me (I mean the first book; the second book is far inferior).—*Rogers.*

The existence of Dr. Beattie and his book, together, will be forgotten in the space of ten years.<sup>1</sup>—*Goldsmith.*

An excellent and amiable man; for such he was, whatever we may think of him as a writer. Scepticism was at this time fashionable among the wits and men of letters. It was thought a great thing that such a man as Beattie, not a clergyman, should have taken up the pen against Hume and Voltaire. The essay had won him popular fame, royal fame and a pension. The Edinburgh Town Council had wooed him to the

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<sup>1</sup> The book referred to by Goldsmith was the "Essay on Truth." The name of Dr. Beattie, however, is not forgotten, nor is it likely to be. His "Minstrel" is one of the most beautiful poems that age produced. No lines have ever been more repeatedly quoted than the opening:—

"Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb

The steep where fame's proud temple shines afar!"—*ED.*

chair of moral philosophy; the Archbishop of York had solicited him to enter the Church of England.—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

I was acquainted with the late Dr. Beattie, of Aberdeen. He wrote English better than any other of his countrymen, and had formed his style and manner of composition on our Addison; but what he admired in him was his tuneful prose and elegant expression; he had no notion of that writer's original and inimitable humour.—*Bishop Hurd.*

### John Langhorne.

1735-1779.

Triumphant dunce, illustrious Langhorne rise,  
And while whole worlds detest thee and despise,  
With rage uncommon, cruelly deny  
Thy hapless muse even privilege to die.—*Kelly.*

Long as the rock shall rear its head on high  
And lift its bold front to the azure sky:  
Long as these adamantine hills survive,  
So long, harmonious Langhorne, shalt thou live.<sup>1</sup>

*Hannah More.*

As a poet his compositions are distinguished by undoubted marks of genius, a fine imagination, and a sensible heart. Imagery and enthusiasm, the great essentials of poetry, inspirit all his works, and place them far above the strains of vulgar composition.—*Dr. Anderson.*

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<sup>1</sup> There is a story told of Hannah More and Langhorne being at Weston-super-Mare together for their health. They met one day upon the sea-shore, and Langhorne wrote the following doggerel with his cane on the sand:—

Along the shore  
Walk'd Hannah More;  
Waves, let this record last!  
Sooner shall ye,  
Proud earth and sea,  
Than what she writes, be past.

Under this, Hannah More wrote with her whip:—

Some firmer basis, polish'd Langhorne, choose,  
To write the dictates of thy charming muse.  
Her strains in solid character rehearse,  
And be thy tablet lasting as thy verse.—*Ed.*

Langhorne! unknown to me (sequestered swain!)  
 Save by thy muse's soul-enchancing lay,  
 To kindred spirits never sung in vain,  
 Accept the tribute of this light essay.  
 Sweet are thy songs: they oft amuse my day  
 Of fancy's visions while I hear thee 'plain,  
 While Scotland's honours claim thy pastoral strain,  
 Or music comes o'er Handel tears to pay. . . .  
 Receive just praise and wreaths that ne'er decay,  
 By fame and virtue twined for thee to wear.—*J. Scott.*

He died in the flower of his prime, when the promises of his youth were on the verge of their full accomplishment. That such a man should take pains to put out the lamp that lights up the chamber of speculation and thought within him, is as lamentable as it is censurable; and little more can be said for him but that his guilt and folly appear harmless in comparison with the malignity of those of our own day who abuse the arts of composition and power of song to spread a moral blight around them.—*W. Roberts, "Life of H. More."*

There is a period in youth when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in after-life. At this season of immature taste, the author was greatly delighted with the poems of Meikle<sup>1</sup> and Langhorne.—*Preface to "Kenilworth."*

## John Horne Tooke.

1736-1812.

No man is to be found of more acuteness or of more undaunted resolution. Methinks, if Mr. John Horne Tooke purposed to drink his glass of wine, and that the bolts of heaven had rent asunder the earth beneath his feet, Mr. J. H. Tooke would still drink his glass of wine.—*J. P. Curran.*

When Horne Tooke was at school, the boys asked him what his father was? Tooke answered, "a Turkey merchant." (He was a poulterer).—*Sam. Rogers.*

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<sup>1</sup> Like Macklin, the actor, who in the north was McLaughlin, and Mallet, the poet, who was Malloch, Meikle, when he left Scotland for London, sobered the spelling of his name into Mickle. He is, however, as frequently called by his original as by his Anglicised name.—*Ed.*

I often dined with Tooke at Wimbledon, and always found him most pleasant and witty. There, his friends would drop in upon him without any invitation; Colonel Bosville would come frequently, bringing with him a dinner from London—fish, &c. Tooke latterly used to expect two or three of his most intimate friends to dine with him every Sunday; and I once offended him a good deal by not joining his Sunday dinner-parties for several weeks.—*Ibid.*

His invectives against his age, his country, and his literary contemporaries, are not worthy of a wise or good man; his temper is soured, and his character corrupted by philology and disappointed ambition. With an admirable simplicity of style, his book shows no simplicity of character; he is full of petty tricks to entangle and surprise his reader; he prepares for every statement by exciting wonder; he never makes it plainly, but always triumphs over the blindness of the whole human race, who left him the discovery.—*Sir J. Mackintosh.*

We see in this man the highest pretensions to public principle covering the poorest individual motives; the most violent public disorders perpetually hazarded to indulge the follies of a passion for being always in the public view; and a long life which might have exhibited the merits, and performed the services of a scholar, a gentleman, and a divine, wasted away in low intercourse with the vulgarity of rabble clubs, degraded by a familiarity with jails, and stigmatized with charges of treason in the realm and to the king. But what were the public results effected by this weak and culpable expenditure of himself for half a century? Nothing. In the whole course of his fretful, officious, and hazardous life he gained nothing. The purity of Parliament, the integrity of the laws, or the rights of the people, if they were questionable, were not to be redeemed or restored by the restlessness of a giddy pretender, who was seen one day trailing at the skirts of power, and on the next running at the head of faction; to-day the heavy panegyrist of Pitt, tomorrow the extravagant partizan of Fox; beginning his career with ribald sycophancy of Wilkes, and then turning his personal knowledge of the man into public venom, and loading him with all the baseness of a mercenary.<sup>1</sup>—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1833.

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<sup>1</sup> Tooke is hardly remembered even as a philologist. The "Diversions of Purley" may be pronounced something more than (or less than) a scarce book.—*ED.*

## Edward Gibbon.

1737-1794.

I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity ; some mischievous habits and appetites have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time.—*Gibbon*.

He possesses that industry of research without which no man deserves the name of historian. His narrative is perspicuous and interesting ; his style is elegant and forcible ; though in some passages, I think, rather too laboured, and in others too quaint.—*Dr. Robertson*.

If you mean to assert that you are a believer in Christianity and meant to recommend it, I must say that your mode of writing has been very ill adapted to gain your purpose. If there be any certain method of discovering a man's real object yours has been to discredit Christianity in fact, while in words you represent yourself as a friend to it ; a conduct which I scruple not to call highly unworthy and mean ; an insult on the common sense of the Christian world.—*Dr. Priestley to Mr. Gibbon*.

"You will, at least," said some one, "allow him the *lumières*." "Just enough," replied Dr. Johnson, "to light him to hell."—*Piozzi*.

Gibbon might have been cut out of a corner of Burke's mind without his missing it.—*Sir James Mackintosh*.

The learned Gibbon was a curious counterbalance to the learned (may I not say less learned ?) Johnson. Their manners and tastes, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the first day I sat down with Johnson in his rusty brown suit, and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology ; and Johnson's famous parallel between Dryden and Pope might be loosely parodied in reference to himself and Gibbon : Johnson's style was grand and Gibbon's elegant ; the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettle-drums and trumpets ; Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys ; Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens. Mauled as I had been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises by condescending once or twice



in the evening to talk with me. The great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of a boy ; but it was done *more suo*—still his mannerism prevailed ; still he tapped his snuff-box ; still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good breeding as if he were conversing with men. His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole in the centre nearly of his visage.<sup>1</sup>—*Colman.*

As to Gibbon I have read a part of his third volume. Though a writer of sense, parts, and industry, I read him with little pleasure. His loaded and luxuriant style is disgusting to the last degree, and his work is polluted everywhere by the most immoral as well as irreligious insinuations.—*Bishop Hurd.*

The luminous page of Gibbon.<sup>2</sup>—*Sheridan.*

Those who have enjoyed his society will agree with me that his conversation was still more captivating than his writings. Perhaps no man ever divided time more fairly between literary labour and social enjoyment ; and hence, probably, he derived his peculiar excellence of making his very extensive knowledge contribute in the highest degree to the use or pleasure of those with whom he conversed. He united in the happiest manner imaginable two characters which are not often found in the same person, the profound scholar and the fascinating companion.<sup>3</sup>—*Lord Sheffield.*

I am not afraid of Gibbon. Whoever has a true taste for Cicero's sweetness and Virgil's majesty will not take *his* modern

<sup>1</sup> Colman thought this description so good that he repeated it in rhyme :—

Like a carved pumpkin was his classic jole,  
Flesh had the solo of his chin encored ;  
Puffed were his cheeks, his mouth a little hole,  
Just in the centre of his visage bored.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Sheridan, on being asked how he came to call Gibbon "luminous," "I said so-luminous," he answered.

<sup>3</sup> "I waited with much impatience for the 'Life and Miscellaneous Works of Gibbon,' and if I have not been quite so much delighted as I supposed, I have yet been highly gratified by becoming more intimately acquainted with the person and character of a great man, whom before I had only admired at an immense distance. Lord Sheffield has not been very discriminating in the selection of some of the pieces he has given to the public, and I wonder that his Lordship should have preferred the character of an exact editor to that of a delicate friend. After all, he has suppressed, I fear, some valuable details concerning the progress of Gibbon's religious opinions, which I think should on no account have been done."—*Professor Playfair, "Miss Berry's Correspondence."*

terseness of expression, or neatness of finish, so completely French, for perfection.—*Piozzi*.

Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which clung to such a thing than now that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne and the "Roman Empire," compel me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon.—*Shelley*.

Gibbon is a malignant painter, and though he does give the likeness of a depraved Christianity, he magnifies deformities, and takes a profane delight in making the picture as hideous as he can. Indeed, in the last two volumes he has taken some pains to hide the cloven foot; but whenever a Christian emperor or bishop of established reputation is brought forward, his encomiurns have so much coldness, and his praises so much sneer, that you cannot help discovering contempt where he professes panegyric.—*II. More*.

Fox used to say that Gibbon's history was immortal, because nobody could do without it; nobody, without vast expense of time and labour, could get elsewhere the information which it contains. I think, and so Lord Grenville thought, that the introductory chapters are the finest part of that history: it was certainly more difficult to write *them* than the rest of the work.—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

He (Porson) thought the "Decline and Fall" beyond all comparison the greatest literary production of the eighteenth century, and was in the habit of repeating long passages from it. Yet I have heard him say "there could not be a better exercise for a schoolboy than to turn a page of it into English."—*"Porsonian."*

Gibbon is an ugly, affected, disgusting fellow, and poisons our literary club to me.—*Boswell's "Diary," 1779.*

## Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar).

1738-1819.

As a political satirist he was in his day almost without a rival, and the popularity of his numerous works would have placed a prudent man in lasting affluence. Improvidence, however, necessitated him to sell the copyright of his works to Messrs. Robinson, Golding, and Walker, for an annuity of 250*l.*, payable half-yearly, during the remainder of his life. Loose agree-

ments have always been the fashion between author and publisher, and in the present case it was not clearly stated what "copyright of his works" meant. The publisher interpreted it as the copyright of both what the author had written at the time of making the agreement, and also of what he should subsequently write. Wolcot, however, declared that he had in the transaction only had regard to his prior productions. After some litigation and more squabbling, the publishers consented to take Wolcot's view of the case; but he never forgave them the discomfort they had caused him.—*Jeaffreson.*

Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar) died in 1819: Campbell being aware that I had known the satirist, begged me to put together a memoir of the Doctor, as he intended to place him in the next edition of the "Specimens," Wolcot being in his opinion one of the most original poets England had ever produced, and one having the most perfect knowledge of human nature.—*Redding's "Life of Thomas Campbell."*

I am not sure that I do not prefer Wolcot (Peter Pindar) to Churchill. Wolcot's "Gipsy" is very neat.—*Sam. Rogers.*

Dr. Wolcot, a loose, jovial, quick-witted clergyman, without a cure, and physician without patients. . . . Wolcot had tried his hand at rhymed lampooning as early as 1778 in his "Epistle to the Reviewers," a fair skit on literary puffery, and the popularity of such poetasters as Hannah More. But he now (1782) came out with the first of that series of audacious rhymes which made his name notorious, and filled his pockets for the rest of the reign of George III. . . . Wolcot had sound judgment both in music and painting.—*C. R. Leslie.*

When the Duke of Kent was last in America, he took a stroll into the country, and entering a neat little cottage, saw a pretty girl with a book in her hand. "What books do you read?" asked his royal highness. The girl with the most artless innocence, replied, "Sir, the Bible and Peter Pindar."—*"Percy Anecdotes."*

## James Macpherson.

1738-1796.

All hail, Macpherson! hail to thee, sire of Ossian! the Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward,

where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin consistence took its course through Europe upon the breath of popular applause . . . . As the translators of the Bible, and Shakspeare, and Milton, and Pope could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them.—*Wordsworth.*

I have scarce ever known a man more perverse and unamiable.—*Hume.*

Elegant, however, and masterly as Mr. Macpherson's translation is, we must never forget whilst we read it that we are putting the merit of the original to a severe test. For we are examining a poet stripped of his native dress, divested of the harmony of his own numbers. . . . If, then, destitute of this advantage, exhibited in a literal version, Ossian still has power to please as a poet; and not to please only, but often to command, to transport, to melt the heart, we may very safely infer that his productions are the offspring of a true and uncommon genius, and we may boldly assign him a place among those whose works are to last for ages.—*Blair.*

Mr. James Macpherson.—I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered to me I shall do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian. What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your "Homer," are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.—*Sam. Johnson.*

I read "Ossian" when I was a boy, and was enamoured with it. When at college I again read "Ossian," with increased delight. I now, although convinced of the imposture, find pleasure in reading Macpherson.—*Dr. Parr.*

I never had a doubt concerning the spuriousness of the "Poems of Ossian." It was impossible the originals should exist. What chiefly gives them an antique air is their penury of idea, a circumstance that does more honour to the inventor's judgment than to his imagination. After all, I have a regard for Macpherson, who has certainly some talents and is a well-behaved man.—*J. Langhorne.*

Macpherson, in his way, was certainly a man of high talents, and his poetic powers as honourable to his country as the use which he made of them, and I fear his personal character, in other respects, was a discredit to it.—*Sir W. Scott.*

## Hugh Kelly.

1739–1777.

Circumstances made it a kind of fashion to depreciate Kelly while alive, for no reason that can be discovered excepting the original sins of poverty and the calling to which he had been brought up,<sup>1</sup> the latter furnishing a handle for the wit of such as assailed him. The learned treated him lightly from the limited nature of his acquirements, though this defect he remedied in part by sedulous study; men of the first genius denied his claims to equality; inferior writers questioned his superiority, and could at least abuse what they failed to equal, for with this class the supposed use of his power as editor of periodical works kept him in continual conflict. His political writings were shrewd and sensible . . . his life was laborious, and his morals, it is said, blameless.—*James Prior.*

Kelly's first introduction to Johnson was not likely to have pleased a person of "predominant vanity." After having sat a short time, he got up to take his leave, saying that he feared a longer visit might be troublesome. "Not in the least, sir," Johnson is said to have replied, "I had forgotten that you were in the room."—*Croker.*

It may be justly said of Kelly that no man ever profited more by a sudden change of fortune in his favour; prosperity caused an immediate and remarkable alteration in his conduct; from a low, petulant, absurd, and ill-bred censurer, he was transformed to the humane, affable, well-bred, good-natured man. His conversation in general was lively and agreeable, he had an uncommon stock of ready language, and though not deeply read, yet what he said was generally worthy of attention. He sometimes, indeed, from an attempt to assume uncommon politeness, and a superabundance of benevolence, became rather tiresome and luscious in his compliments.—*T. Davies.*

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<sup>1</sup> He was apprenticed to a staymaker.—*ED.*

## Mrs. Thrale (Madame Piozzi).

1739-1821.

One of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women who are perpetually saying or doing something that is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable.—*Macaulay*.

For that Piozzi's wife, Sir John, exhort her  
To draw her immortality from porter ;  
Give up her anecdotal inditing,  
And study housewifery, instead of writing.—*Wolcot*.

Mrs. Thrale always appeared to me to possess at least as much information, a mind as cultivated, and more brilliancy of intellect than Mrs. Montagu, but she did not descend among men from such an eminence, and she talked much more, as well as more unguardedly, on every subject. She was the provider and conductor of Johnson, who lived almost constantly under her roof, or more properly, under that of Mr. Thrale, both in town and at Streatham. He did not, however, spare her more than other women in his attacks if she courted and provoked his animadversions.—*Wraxall*.

On the praises of Mrs. Thrale, Johnson used to dwell with a peculiar delight, a paternal fondness, expressive of conscious exultation in being so intimately acquainted with her. One day, in speaking of her to Mr. Harris, author of "Hermes," and expatiating on her various perfections—the solidity of her virtues, the brilliancy of her wit, and the strength of her understanding, &c.—he quoted some lines (a stanza, I believe, but from what author I know not), with which he concluded his most eloquent eulogium, and of these I retained but the two last lines :—

Virtues—of such a generous kind,  
Good in the last recesses of the mind.—*Miss Reynolds*.

Her conversation is that bright wine of the intellects which has no lees. Dr. Johnson told me truth when he said she had more colloquial wit than most of our literary women ; it is indeed a fountain of perpetual flow.—*Miss Seward*.

See Thrale's gay widow with a satchel roam,  
And bring in pomp laborious nothings home.<sup>1</sup>—*Gifford.*

She was in truth a most wonderful character for talents and eccentricity, for wit, genius, generosity, spirit, and powers of entertainment.—*Madame D'Arblay.*

Breakfasted with the Fitzgeralds. Took me to call on Mrs. Piozzi—a wonderful old lady: faces of other times seemed to crowd over her as she sat—the Johnsons, Reynolds's, &c. Though turned eighty, she has all the quickness and intelligence of a gay young woman.—*T. Moore.*

Her mind, despite her masculine acquirements, was thoroughly feminine; she had more tact than genius, more sensibility and quickness of perception than depth, comprehensiveness, or continuity of thought. But her very discursiveness prevented her from becoming wearisome; her varied knowledge supplied an inexhaustible store of topics and illustrations; her lively fancy placed them in attractive lights, and her mind has been well likened to a kaleidoscope.—*A. Hayward.*

I was afterwards very intimate with the Piozzis, and visited them often at Streatham. The world was most unjust in blaming Mrs. Thrale for marrying Piozzi; he was a very handsome, gentlemanly, and amiable person, and made her a very good husband. In the evening he used to play to us most beautifully on the piano. Her daughter never would see her after that marriage; and (poor woman) when she was a very great age I have heard her say that "she would go down upon her knees to them if they would only be reconciled to her."—*Rogers.*

## James Boswell.

1740-1795.

His imagination being lively, he often said things of which the effect was very different from the intention.—*Boswell, on Himself.*

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to her "Travels," "By the excessive vulgarisms so plentiful in these volumes," wrote Horace Walpole, "one might suppose the writer had never stirred out of the parish of St. Giles." Miss Seward, on the other hand, says, "No work of the sort I ever read possesses in an equal degree the power of placing the reader in the scenes and among the people it describes. Wit, knowledge, and imagination illuminate its pages."—*ED.*

Corsican Boswell, a very agreeable, good-natured man ; he perfectly adores Johnson.—*Hannah More.*

Boswell in the year 1745 was a fine boy, wore a white cockade and prayed for King James, till one of his uncles gave him a shilling, on condition that he would pray for King George, which he accordingly did. *So you see that Whigs of all ages are made the same way.*—*Johnson.*

He united lively manners with indefatigable diligence, and the volatile curiosity of a man about town with the drudging patience of a chronicler.—*Croker.*<sup>1</sup>

James Boswell, a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English language exists either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging around the stems and imbibing the juices of strong plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes, and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitfield, and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson.—*Macaulay.*

He talks with so much ease and such grace,  
That all charmed to attention we sit,  
And he sings with so comic a face  
That our sides are just ready to split. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Grace Wharton is not highly complimentary to Mr. Croker ; she calls him "The serpent of critics, and ring-nose of dilettants." Dr. Madden follows with an oblique hit : "Vain as Beau Brummel was, he was not revengeful, and no provocation could have worked upon him as a fancied provocation did upon 'the Right Hon. John Wilson Croker,' who red-taped the open-hearted notes of Moore, and produced them as *petards* to blow to pieces the poet's reputation when that once gayest of bards lay mute and defenceless in his grave."



Boswell is pleasant and gay,  
 For frolic by nature designed :  
 He heedlessly rattles away,  
 When the company is to his mind.—*Boswell.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In these verses Boswell proclaims himself a sociable man ; but I think there must have been something extremely trying about his sociability. A man who humbles himself so low before those whom he accepts as his superiors, assuredly exalts himself to a corresponding degree above those whom he looks upon as his inferiors. I should say that Boswell when sober must have been a very difficult man to get on with. The radical meanness of his intellect must have rendered his presence equivalent to a sense of humiliation to those about him. He had associated long enough with the Doctor to catch his note. He assumed the pomposity, the rhythmic declamation, the portentous sirs ! of the surly sage. But with all the contortions, he had no particle of the inspiration. Imagine this man catching you up after the Doctor's fashion, and substituting for your common sense some decayed period recollected from one of Johnson's worst bits of sophistry ! Yet this was Boswell's habit. Do not, pray, judge him by his own book, but by what the Piozzis, the Hawkinses, the Wolcots, the Walpoles, have said of him. In his own book he is in the presence of Johnson, and in that presence he was slightly different from what he was out of it. It is like looking at his picture by Reynolds, and the caricature of him by George Langton. In his own volume he sits obsequious, with tablets in hand—a sort of literary taster, thrusting his pump into the numberless barrels of rich wines that lay stored in Johnson's capacious vault of a mind, that he may catch and bottle the choice inspiring flow. The "Life of Johnson" shows only one aspect of Boswell. He is, indeed, in the attitude for which nature designed him, and in the attitude in which he was exactly likely to portray himself—the prostrate. But he will get up presently and walk away, blown out tight and stubborn with what he himself calls the "Johnsonian æther." He has now reached another company. What ! can it be possible that this declamatory thing—this ostentatious magpie, showing his own mean garb through the badly-disposed finery which he has stolen, or the dowdy soiled feathers which he has picked up—this chatteringling who is interrupting the conversation and monopolizing the attention with his clamorous Johnsonese about the scarcity of coin at Mull, the devotion of the Corsicans to Paoli, the superiority of the Scotch kilt over English breeches—and who permits of no interruption but that of his own hand when he raises glass after glass of port wine to his active lips, and dyes his complexion a deeper red with every libation—can this be the Mr. Boswell who but a short time since might have been recommended to low like a cow instead of talking like a fool—who might have sat with shuddering pencil and submissive face whilst Johnson roared, amidst strange convulsions, how sick he was both of Boswell and himself ?

I am prepared to admit that Boswell had imposed upon himself an arduous task—the writing of Dr. Johnson's life. That life he had determined to write, happen what would. I can comprehend the feelings of a man who has laboriously collected a multitude of *ana*, and to whom more, much more, is yet necessary. He is not to be diverted from his task for a twofold reason ; he is not only most unwilling that all his past labour of

The circle of his acquaintance among the learned, the witty, and indeed among all ranks and professions, was extremely extensive, as his talents were considerable, and his convivial powers made his company much in request.—*Sir W. Forbes.*

The incarnation of toadyism.—*W. Irving.*

This lively and ingenious biographer is now beyond the reach of praise or censure. He died at London, May 19, 1795, in the 55th year of his age. His death is an irreparable loss to English literature. He had many failings, and many virtues, and many amiable qualities which predominated over the frailties incident to human nature.—*Dr. Anderson.*

There is no denying that Boswell possessed in an extraordinary degree the art of inducing men of eminence to talk freely with him, and even to treat him with confidence and consideration.—*Gray.*

His "Life of Samuel Johnson" exhibits a striking likeness of

collection should have been to no purpose, but he is also most unwilling to relinquish the execution of a design which, with something of a prophetic eye, perhaps, he judged will hand his name down to a remote posterity. But what manner of ambition is this which is willing to achieve its end at the sacrifice of every feeling that procures respect and esteem? Reflect, to what quality of the human mind Boswell has given his name. Apart from the contempt in which he was held by his contemporaries, consider the opinions that have been deliberately written by the most eminent writers since his time—opinions so helplessly degrading to his character that even Scotchmen have lost heart, decline to support him, and would willingly give him to England, or forget him! Yet this man has not only written a good book, he has written *the* only good biography. In this species of composition let us admit, for the sake of Boswell, no degrees of excellence. "Eclipse is first," says Macaulay, "and the rest nowhere." Can you explain how he wrote this book? It exhibits taste; yet Boswell was without taste. It exhibits judgment; yet Boswell was without judgment. He exhibits taste in his design; he exhibits judgment in his selections. Yet even in his book he shows how utterly incapable he is of his book. His comments upon the conversations he records might have been dictated by Mrs. Williams or Mrs. Desmoulins. When he praises Johnson's perspicuity he selects the most elaborate definition from the dictionary—a definition indeed so elaborate as to be actually without meaning. He was without penetration, for he could see no excellence in any of his contemporaries—I should say English contemporaries,—for with Dalrymple, Hume, Robertson, and Kames he professes to be pleased. Yet even here his admiration is suspicious, for he praises them only before Johnson, and I have observed that he rarely praises men before Johnson but with the view of exciting the Doctor's sarcasms. Goldsmith, Sterne, Gibbon, Akenside, were dull fellows in Boswell's eyes. How came this man to write the "most interesting biography in the world?"—*ED.*

a confident, overweening, dictatorial pedant, though of parts and learning; and of a weak, shallow, submissive admirer of such a character, deriving a vanity from that very admiration.—*Dr. Hurd*<sup>1</sup>

Bozzy is really a wizard; he makes the sun stand still. Till his work is done the future stands respectfully aloof. Out of ever-shifting time he has made fixed and permanent certain years, and in these Johnson talks and argues, while Burke

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<sup>1</sup> The pride of Boswell is intensely absurd when the undignified conditions with which he had surrounded his life are recalled. The pedigree of Punch may be allowed to be considerable; and the pedigree of Boswell may be allowed to be considerable. But Punch expatiating to his audience on the elation with which he reflects on the antiquity and honourable alliances of his family might not present a spectacle less ludicrous than is exhibited by Boswell when he tells his readers the same tale. The pride of Boswell bears the same relation to respectable pride that the face of a monkey bears to the face of a man. Often his pride walks, often his pride creeps, but whether it walks or whether it creeps it is the same very objectionable caricature of what in its natural state is decent and commendable. Of Boswell Mr. Croker is loud in the praise. His talents, he says, were by no means inconsiderable; he was well-read, and knew the world; his narrative is full of good sense, and his style fluent and perspicacious. Though of Mr. Croker's capacity of judging between what is infamously bad and what is only moderately good, he has not left us a single proof, his opinion may be suffered to rest; it is too late, the task would be too unprofitable, to disturb it. But Mr. Croker, not satisfied with the nonsense with which he has fringed Boswell's plain narrative, expresses his surprise that Sir Alexander Boswell, Boswell's eldest son, should have objected to the kind of reputation that his father had attained. Where is the surprise? Before and after the death of Johnson the print-shops were full of engravings representing the Doctor as a bear led about by Boswell as a monkey. Satires on Boswell flew thick. Peter Pindar, with the virulence of great satirical powers, had stabbed and re-stabbed unhappy Boswell until he had made mere carrion of his reputation, of which the odour served to collect all the rest of the critical crows. Madame Piozzi, with a tongue barbed by disappointment and the contempt which her marriage had provoked from an impertinent public, was busy diffusing the name of Boswell in her coteries, coupled with recollections of humiliation and defeat, such as no other man but Boswell could have endured for an hour. The epigrams of Beauclerk, like the down of thistles, were blown about; the seeds fell, and fresh crops sprung. Horace Walpole was setting his table in a roar with his sarcastic portrait of the Jackanapes Boswell and the gigantic pedant Johnson. George Selwyn was making rare capital out of him. Gifford, with ponderous lance, was running his laborious muck. Colman was repeating Foote's imitation of him with "new effects." Sheridan was quoting him. That Sir Alexander Boswell should have objected to the kind of reputation that his father had acquired is natural, but it is even more natural that Mr. Croker should have failed to see the reason of Sir Alexander's objection.—ED.

listens, and Reynolds takes snuff, and Goldsmith, with hollowed hand, whispers a sly remark to his neighbour. There have sat these ghosts for seventy years now, looked at and listened to by the passing generations, and there they still sit, the one voice going on! Smile at Bozzy as we may, he was a spiritual phenomenon quite as rare as Johnson.—*A. Smith.*

A Jackanapes who has lately made a noise here, one Boswell.—*Horace Walpole.*

I do not think so badly of Boswell; he can be an honest fellow. Goldsmith's description of him was the best. Some one, under momentary irritation, I forget now on what occasion, called him a "Scotch cur." "No, no," replied Goldsmith, playing on the word, "you are too severe; he is merely a Scotch *bur*. Tom Davies threw him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty of *sticking*."—*John Wilkes.*

And Boswell, aping with preposterous pride,  
Johnson's worst frailties, rolls from side to side;  
His heavy head from hour to hour erects,  
Affects the fool, and is what he affects.—*Gifford.*

He had an odd mock solemnity of tone and manner that he had acquired imperceptibly from constantly thinking of and imitating Dr. Johnson. . . . There was also something slouching in the gait and dress of Mr. Boswell that wore an air ridiculously enough of purporting to personify the same model. His clothes were always too large for him; his hair or wig was constantly in a stage of negligence; and he never for a moment sat still or upright on a chair. Every look and movement displayed either intentional or involuntary imitation.—*Madame D'Arblay.*

## William Combe.

1741–1823.

Mr. Combe possessed great talents and a very fine person, as well as a good fortune, which unhappily he soon dissipated among the high connexions to which his talents and attainments introduced him, and he subsequently passed through many vicissitudes of life, which at length compelled him to resort to literature for support.—*Anon., "Life of Combe."*

That infamous Combe.—*Walpole.*

It was whilst engaged in this way, and when his fortune was

at a very low ebb, that he was sent for by Mr. R. Ackerman, the then well-known printseller of the Strand. This must have been early in the year 1810. Rowlandson, it appears, had offered to Mr. Ackerman a number of drawings, representing an old clergyman and schoolmaster, who felt or fancied himself in love with the fine arts, Quixotically travelling during his holidays in quest of the picturesque; and as the publisher was about starting a new *Poetical Magazine* or rhyming miscellany for the then fashionable romantic verses, with pictures to increase their attraction, it occurred to him that Rowlandson's illustrations would suit the magazine very well, if a narrative in verse could be got to accompany them. Combe readily fell in with the idea, and a bargain was at once concluded. . . . Such was the origin of "Dr. Syntax"—or "The Schoolmaster's Tour," as the work was first called—in the monthly pages of the *Poetical Magazine*.—*Hotten*.

Whether there will be any desire or rather means of suspending a piece of marble over my grave I have my doubts.—*Combe*.

Talked of Combe; said to be the writer of Macleod's "Loo-Choo," as he certainly was of Lord Lyttleton's "Letters" and many other books of other people's. "Doctor Syntax" is his. Combe kicked Lord Lyttleton downstairs at some watering-place for having ridiculed Lady Archer by calling her a drunken peacock, on account of the sort of rainbow feathers and dress she wore. Lord L. also had rolled a piece of blanc-mange into a ball, and covering it with variegated comfits, said, "This is the sort of egg a drunken peacock would lay."—*T. Moore*.

Combe, author of "The Diaboliad," of Lord Lyttleton's "Letters," and, more recently, of "Dr. Syntax's Three Tours," was a most extraordinary person. During a very long life he had seen much of the world—its ups and downs. He was certainly well connected. Fitzpatrick recollected him at Douay College. He moved once in the highest society, and was very intimate with the Duke of Bedford. Twenty thousand pounds were unexpectedly bequeathed to him by an old gentleman, who said "he ought to have been Combe's father" (that is, he had been on the point of marrying Combe's mother), and who therefore left him that large sum. Combe contrived to get rid of the money in an incredibly short time.—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

## Dr. Paley.

1743-1805.

Mr. Paley's book has been universally well received, and the first edition is already gone. As he wrote and published it at my desire, I have just given him a prebend of St. Paul's, as a mark of my approbation and gratitude. It has given me much pleasure to find that this book has been much read and approved at Cambridge, where I think it will do essential service; and indeed it is admirably calculated for all the higher orders of the community, as yours will be for the lower.—*Bishop Porteus to H. More.*

This day finished Paley's "Natural Theology." It is a very able work—evinces the author's acquaintance with anatomy and almost all science. All these endowments are made subservient to the grand purpose for which the book is written. But the book is deficient in some essential points.—*H. More.*

All the theological works of all the numerous bishops whom (Pitt) made and translated are not, when put together, worth fifty pages of the "Horæ Paulinæ," of the "Natural Theology," or of the "View of the Evidences of Christianity."—*Macaulay.*

The small deference rendered to the most holy things by the able theologian Paley, is not the least remarkable of his characteristics.—*Ettrick Shepherd.*

Among several anecdotes of Paley, communicated to me long ago by a gentleman who resided in his neighbourhood, were these:—When Paley rose in the church, he set up a carriage, and by his wife's directions, his arms were painted on the panels. They were copied from the engraving on a silver cup which Mrs. P. supposed to be the bearings of his family. Paley thought it a pity to undeceive his wife; but the truth was, he had purchased the cup at a sale. He permitted—nay, wished—his daughters to go to evening parties; but insisted that one of them should always remain at home to give her assistance, if needed, by rubbing him, &c., in case of an attack of the rheumatic pains to which he was subject. "This," he said, "taught them natural affection."—*Note to Rogers's "Table Talk."*

We none of us can believe that Dr. Paley has exercised his mind upon intellectual philosophy in vain. The fruits of it in

him are sound sense, delivered so perspicuously, that a man may profit by it, and a child may comprehend it.—*Sydney Smith.*

When Dr. Paley had finished his "Moral Philosophy" the MS. was offered to Mr. Faulder, of Bond Street, for one hundred guineas; but he declined the risk of publishing it on his own account. When it was published, and the success of the book had been in some degree ascertained, the author again offered it to the same bookseller for three hundred pounds; but he refused to give more than two hundred and fifty. While this negotiation was pending, a bookseller from Carlisle happening to call on an eminent publisher in Paternoster Row, was commissioned by him to offer Dr. Paley one thousand pounds for the copyright of his book. The bookseller on his return to Carlisle duly executed his commission, which was communicated without delay to the Bishop of Clonfert, who being at that time in London, had undertaken the management of the affair. "Never did I suffer so much anxious fear," said Dr. Paley, in relating the circumstance, "as on this occasion, lest my friend should have concluded the bargain with Mr. Faulder before my letter could reach him." Luckily he had not; but on receiving the letter went immediately into Bond Street, and made his new demand. Mr. Faulder, though in no small degree surprised and astonished at the advance, agreed for the sum required before the Bishop left the house.—"*Percy Anecdotes.*"

### Miss Aikin (Mrs. Barbauld).

1743-1825.

Miss Aikin was an instance of early cultivation, but in what did it terminate? In marrying a little Presbyterian parson, who keeps an infant boarding school, so that all her employment now is

"To suckle fools and chronicle small beer."

She tells the children "This is a cat and that is a dog, with four legs and a tail: see there! you are much better than a cat or a dog, for you can speak." If I had bestowed such an education on a daughter, and had discovered that she thought of marrying such a fellow, I would have sent her to *the Congress.*—*Johnson.*

I greatly admire her talents and taste ; but our views, both political and religious, run so very wide of each other, that I lose the great pleasure that I might have otherwise found in her society, which is very intellectual.—*Hannah More.*

He (C. J. Fox) thought Mrs. Barbauld's "Life of Richardson" admirable ; and regretted that she wasted her talents in writing books for children (excellent as those books might be) now that there were so many pieces of that description.—*Sam. Rogers.*

## Rowland Hill.

1744-1833.

No man has ever drawn, since the days of our Saviour, such sublime images from nature ; here Mr. Hill excels every other man.—*Robert Hall.*

Mr. Hill once introduced Dr. Jenner to a nobleman in these terms :—"Allow me to present to your lordship my friend, Dr. Jenner, who has been the means of saving more lives than any other man." Dr. Jenner bowed, and said with great earnestness, addressing Mr. Hill, "Ah ! would, like you, I could say *souls.*"—"Life of Rowland Hill."

On the part of the Calvinists the most conspicuous writers were the brothers Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) and Rowland Hill, and Augustus Montague Toplady. . . . Never were any writings more thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism than those of the predestinarian champions. It would scarcely be credible that three persons of good birth and education, and of unquestionable goodness and piety, should have carried on controversy in so vile a manner and with so detestable a spirit, if the hatred of the theologians had not unhappily become proverbial.—*Southey.*

He was rather above the middle height in stature, and when young was remarkably thin, though wonderfully strong and active. His countenance was expressive of the complexion of his mind, and the play upon his lips, and piercing look of his small grey eyes, denoted both intelligence and humour. When between fifty and sixty years of age, his fine upright figure, combined with a high-bred, gentlemanlike deportment, caused him to be the subject of general admiration ; and when the weight of eighty years rested on his head, his erect form was



not bowed down, nor was the vigour of his mind in the slightest degree impaired. . . . In his theological opinions he leant towards the tenets of Calvin, but what is called Hyper-Calvinism he could not endure. In a system of doctrine he was the follower of no man, but drew his sermons fresh from a prayerful reading of the Bible, and happy would it be for all ministers if in this respect they imitated his example. . . . He was for drawing together all the people of God, wherever they could meet, and was willing to join in a universal communion with Christians of every name. When on one occasion he had preached in a chapel where none but baptized adults were admitted to the Sacrament, he wished to have communicated with them, but he was told respectfully "You cannot sit down at *our* table." He only replied calmly, "I thought it was the *Lord's* table."—*Sidney, "Memoirs of R. Hill."*

I have seen Rowland Hill (I believe a sincere and excellent man) . . . guilty of such violence in the pulpit that the impression of those who were not accustomed to his oddities was that he was a maniac. Frequently I have seen him wield and poise in the air and shake the Bible at his congregation, till he has dropped it among his auditory. (It was a common thing to see him stoop to pick it up within the pulpit.) I have seen him, while dealing out brimstone by the bushel and torments by the hundredweight, knock the candles on either side out of their sockets. The pulpit-cushion was another plaything. I have often expected he would throw it at me, and I perfectly recollect making the preparatory action of a cricketer as I exchanged looks with some of my companions, youngsters like myself, to catch it when he should hurl it from him in his enthusiasm. He, who had the advantage of birth and association, and a college education, should have proudly maintained his station in contradistinction to the vulgar herd of the "elect," instead of being a kind of leader to them; but he was as remarkable as the most unwashed and uneducated of the set for the preaching-made-easy system—the reducing the sublime to the level of such understandings as theirs to whom they principally addressed themselves—the notion of making divine truths clear to "the meanest capacity" by vulgar illustration. I shall mention only three or four of his most extraordinary attempts at effect in this way. "The love of our Lord is like a good large round of beef, my brethren; you may cut and come again." "You all know how difficult it is to catch a pig

by the tail; you will find it equally so to catch the love of our Lord after backsliding.” — “*Autobiography of Charles Mathews.*”

## Hannah More.

1745-1833.

We bear testimony to her talents, her good sense, and her real piety. There occur every now and then in her productions very original and very profound observations. Her advice is often characterized by the most amiable good sense, and conveyed in the most brilliant and inviting style. If, instead of belonging to a trumpery faction, she had only watched over those great points of religion in which the hearts of every sect of Christians are interested, she would have been one of the most useful and valuable writers of her day.—*Sydney Smith.*

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<sup>1</sup> “I remember Rowland Hill,” adds Mathews, “from my infancy. He was an odd, absent, slighty person. So inattentive was he to nicety of dress that I have seen him enter my father’s house with one red slipper and one shoe, the knees of his breeches untied, and the strings dangling down his legs. In this state he had walked from Blackfriars Road unconscious of his eccentric appearance.” In his “Life” some of his sayings have been preserved. These illustrations exhibit him with all Dr. Johnson’s manner, and nothing of Dr. Johnson’s wit. Here are some samples: Two sets of people growing warm in a religious discussion, Rowland Hill was appealed to. We are told that he “put on one of his arch looks,” and exclaimed, “Well, I declare I must say you are both equally wrong; and I was just thinking that if you were tied together by the tail like two cats, and thrown over a forked stick, you would scratch each other’s eyes out.” “The effect,” says the delighted narrator, “of such an unexpected decision must be left to the imagination.” “I well remember,” says the Rev. Mr. Sidney, “one morning the footman ushered in a most romantic-looking lady. She advanced with measured steps, and with an air that caused Mr. Hill to retreat towards the fireplace. She began, ‘Divine shepherd’—‘Pon my word, ma’am!’—‘I hear you have great influence with the royal family.’ ‘Well, ma’am, and did you hear anything else?’ ‘Now, seriously, sir, my son has the most wonderful poetic powers. Sir, his poetry is of a sublime order—noble, original, fine——’ ‘Well, I wonder what will come next?’ muttered Mr. Hill, in a low tone. ‘Yes, sir, pardon the liberty, and therefore I called to ask you to get him made poet-laureate.’ ‘Ma’am, you might as well ask me to get him made Archbishop of Canterbury.’ Surely there is no point, no humour here. Let us hope Mr. Hill did better than this.—ED.

With feeling, elegance and force  
 Unite their matchless power ;  
 And prove that from a heavenly source  
 Springs Eldred of the Bower.<sup>1</sup>  
 True, cries the god of verse, 'tis mine,  
 And now the farce is o'er ;  
 To vex proud man I wrote each line,  
 And gave them Hannah More.—*Garrick.*

There was a happy balance in the qualities of this gifted lady which kept her from all extremes. With a due estimate of the value of modern advancement, she retained the savour of our island character, as it was once distinguished by its probity and plainness among the communities of Christendom. What woman was, and what woman is, in her best estate, in the past and present periods of her domestic history, were displayed in her deportment ; and what woman should be under all estates was illustrated in those principles which raised her character above the reach of shifting opinions, and made it a pattern for all times and countries.—*William Roberts.*<sup>2</sup>

The Bishop of London told me yesterday that Mrs. H. More was very unwell. Her life is of too much consequence to the world not to create serious alarm to her friends when she is indisposed. . . . My reverence for her unblemished character and exalted piety has turned into respectful attention.—*Duchess of Gloucester.*

<sup>1</sup> One of Mrs. More's earlier compositions. It was lavishly extolled. Johnson grew hyperbolic in its praises.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> William Roberts, Hannah More's biographer, and the sometime editor of the *British Review*, celebrated by Lord Byron as "My Grandmother's Review."

"For fear some prudish readers should grow skittish,  
 I've bribed my grandmother's review—the British."

Such were the lines—the most transparent irony that was ever put into a couplet—which provoked from the *British* the retort that set the whole of England laughing at the editor's imbecility. "No misdemeanour," cried Mr. Roberts, "not even that of sending into the world obscene and blasphemous poetry, the product of a studious lewdness, and a laboured impiety, appears to us in so detestable a light as the acceptance of a *present* by an editor of a Review." Imagine this ! Lord Byron retorted under the pseudonym of Wortley Clutterbuck. He should have stuck to rhyme ; for nothing can be more lamentably weak than his letter. Macaulay, Jeffrey, Southey, or even Croker, would have made Roberts, to use Johnson's blunt language, hang himself.—ED.

It has been my fortune, during a long and close intercourse with mankind, to have enjoyed many and valuable opportunities of observing and studying the human character under various and trying circumstances ; but never, I can say with truth, have I known a character in all respects so perfect as that of Mrs. Hannah More.—*Dr. Carrick.*

Holy Hannah !—*Horace Walpole.*

It is no small gratification to me that I have seen and conversed with Mrs. Hannah More. She is indisputably the first literary female I ever met with ; in part no doubt because she is a Christian.—*Coleridge.*

She led a happier life than any one I ever heard of. All that elegant luxury afforded she enjoyed, without the care, anxiety, and expense that their owners find unavoidable ; she luxuriated in the highest intellectual pleasures, and drank them from the purest sources, living as she did with the wise, the worthy, the witty, and the elegant, the learned, the pious, philosophers and saints. Of the praise that flows from the heart no queen or princess ever received more to the last day of her protracted though not painless existence.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

## William Hayley.

1745–1820.

Since Pope's death I am satisfied that England has not seen so happy a mixture of strong sense and flowing numbers.—*Gibbon.*

Much pains were taken by Mr. Hayley's friends to prevail on Dr. Johnson to read the "Triumphs of Temper," when it was in its zenith ; at last he consented, but never got beyond the two first pages, of which he uttered a few words of contempt that I now have forgotten.—*Mrs. Rose.*

Behold ! ye tarts ! one moment spare the text—  
Hayley's last work and worst—until his next.—*Byron.*

His style in youth or age is still the same,  
For ever feeble, and for ever tame.—*Ibid.*

Mr. Hayley is now forgotten, and the *intense* school have taken place of a man who had ten times their knowledge, learning, and taste. Fairly, nothing but Pope stands before him as an *essayist in rhyme*. What, after the "Rape of the Lock," can

be read *but* "The Triumphs of Temper" in the *heroi-comic*? Who has ever furnished such illustrations as his *notes* on epic poetry supply, with his masterly specimens and analyses of Dante and Ercilla? What is neater or more amusing than his comedies in rhyme?—*James Boaden.*

If Hayley was formerly over-rated he is now undervalued. He was a most accomplished person, as indeed is evident from the notes to his various compositions—notes which Lord Holland admired greatly.—*Sam. Rogers.*

The vain and silly egotism and the tiresome load of epithets which clogs his style with sickly affectation, revolt me so much that I have barely candour enough left to give Hayley credit for kindness of heart and steadiness of attachment.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

## Sir William Jones.

1746–1799.

Oriental Jones was with us; but he is one of those great geniuses whom it is easier to read than to hear; for whenever he speaks it is with seeming reluctance, though master of many languages.—*Hannah More.*

Sir William Jones made his forensic *début* about the same time as Erskine, though, according to the account given in Miss Hawkins's "Memoirs," on her brother's authority, without producing an equally favourable impression. He spoke for nearly an hour with great confidence in a highly declamatory tone, and with studied action, impressing all present who had ever heard of Cicero or Hortensius with the belief that he had worked himself up into the notion of his being one or both of them for the occasion. Being little acquainted with the bar, he spoke of a case as having been argued by one Mr. Baldwin, a gentleman in long practice, sitting in the first row. This caused a titter, but the grand effect was yet to come. The case involved certain family disagreements, and he had occasion to mention a governess. Some wicked wag told him he had been too hard upon her, so the day following he rose as soon as the judges had taken their seats, and began in the same high tone, and with both hands extended, "My lords, I have been informed, to my inexpressible mortification and regret, that in what I yesterday had the honour to state to your lordships I was under-

stood to mean to say that Miss —— was a harlot." He got no further. *Solvuntur risu tabule.* And so soon as the judges could speak for laughing they hastened to assure him that no impression unfavourable to Miss ——'s morals had been made upon the Court. Notwithstanding this inauspicious commencement, and his fondness for literature, Jones obtained a fair share of business. His "Essay on Bailments" is considered the best written English law-book on a practical subject. None can be placed alongside of it for style and method.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1845.

## Dr. Parr.

1747–1825.

There is a lovingness of heart about Parr, a susceptibility of the affections, which would endear him, even without his Greek.—*W. Taylor.*

Having spent an evening at Mr. Langton's with the Rev. Dr. Parr, Johnson was much pleased with the conversation of that learned gentleman, and after he was gone, said to Mr. Langton, "Sir, I am obliged to you for having asked me this evening; Parr is a fair man; I do not know when I have had an occasion for such free controversy. It is remarkable how much of a man's life may pass without meeting with any instance of this kind of open discussion."—*Langton's "Johnsoniana."*

A great scholar, as rude and violent as most Greek scholars are, unless they happen to be bishops. He has left nothing behind him worth leaving; he was rather fitted for the law than the church, and would have been a more considerable man if he had been more knocked about among his equals. He lived with country gentlemen and clergymen, who flattered and feared him.—*Sydney Smith.*

Lord Holland used to say that it was most unfortunate for a man so full of learning and information as Dr. Parr that he could not easily communicate his knowledge; for when he spoke nobody could make out what he said, and when he wrote, nobody could read his handwriting.—*Earl Russell.*

... The distinguished scholar, Dr. Parr, who, to the massy erudition of a former age, joined all the free and enlightened intelligence of the present.—*Thomas Moore.*

That model of pedants.—*Sir W. Scott.*

Dr. Parr had a great deal of sensibility. When I read to him in Lincoln's-inn Fields the account of O'Coighly's death, the tears rolled down his cheeks.<sup>1</sup> . . . Parr was frequently tiresome in conversation, talking like a schoolmaster. He had a horror of the east wind ; and Tom Sheridan once kept him a prisoner in the house for a fortnight by fixing the weather-cock in that direction.—*Sam. Rogers.*

Porson had no very high opinion of Parr, and could not endure his metaphysics. One evening Parr was beginning a regular harangue on the origin of evil, when Porson stopped him short by asking "What was the use of it?" Porson, who shrank on all occasions from praise of himself, was only annoyed by the eulogies which Parr lavished on him in print. When Parr published the "Remarks on Combe's Statement," in which Porson is termed a "giant in literature," &c., Porson said, "How should Dr. Parr be able to take the measure of a giant?"—"*Porsoniana.*"

What, meanwhile, must be the condition of an Era, when the highest advantages there become perverted into drawbacks ; when, if you take two men of genius, and put the one between the handles of a plough, and mount the other between the painted coronets of a coach and four, and bid them both move along, the former shall arrive a Burns, the latter a Byron ; two men of talent, and put the one into a printer's chapel, full of lamp-black, tyrannous usage, hard toil, and the other into Oxford Universities, with lexicons and libraries, and hired expositors and sumptuous endowments, the former shall come out a Dr. Franklin, the latter a Dr. Parr !—*Carlyle.*

He died in March, 1825, in his eightieth year, like the celebrated linguist and scholar, Mezzofanti, leaving behind few records of his vast erudition. All the remains of Dr. Parr are comprised in a collection of sermons, a "Tract on Education," a "Preface to Bellendenus de Statu," and a "Letter from Irenopolis, to the Inhabitants of Eleutheropolis," "Character of the late Charles James Fox," and some ephemeral pamphlets, occasioned by his critical disputes and controversies with Dr. Charles Combe and others—

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<sup>1</sup> Parr defended O'Coighly by saying, "He might have been worse." "How so?" inquired Sir James Mackintosh. "Why, Jemmy," replied Parr, "he was an Irishman—he might have been a Scotchman ; he was a priest—he might have been a lawyer ; he was a traitor—he might have been an apostate."

Of Bentley's feuds—of Porson's—Parr's  
Most savage Greek and Latin wars,

few remains are left ; and mankind would be nothing the worse if their battles had never been waged at all. Dr. Parr was renowned for his smoking, even more than Dr. Isaac Barrow. He would empty twenty pipes of an evening in his own house ; and when he was on his good behaviour in fashionable circles, it is said, he pined after the weed.—*Dr. Madden.*

To half of Busby's skill in mood and tense  
Add Bentley's pedantry without his sense ;  
From Warburton take all the spleen you find,  
But leave his genius and his wit behind ;  
Squeeze Churchill's rancour from the verse it flows in,  
And knead it stiff with Johnson's turgid prosing ;  
Add all the piety of Saint-Voltaire,  
Mix the gross compounds—Fiat—Dr. Parr.—*Epigram.*<sup>1</sup>

## Jeremy Bentham.

1747-1832.

I should like to live the remaining years of my life, a year at a time, at the end of the next six or eight centuries, to see the effects which my writings will, by that time, have had on the world.—*Bentham.*<sup>2</sup>

The style of Mr. Bentham is unpopular, not to say unintelligible. He wrote a language of his own that *darkens* knowledge. His works have been translated into French—they ought to be translated into English. People wondered that he was not prosecuted for the boldness and severity of some of his invectives ; but he might have wrapped up high treason in one of his inextricable periods, and it would never have found its way into Westminster Hall. He was a kind of manuscript-author—he wrote a cypher hand, which the vulgar

<sup>1</sup> From the *John Bull*. Very likely by Theodore Hook.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Bentham's vanity finds a copious illustration in his own sayings. "I am a selfish man," says he, "as selfish as any man can be. But in me, somehow or other, so it happens, selfishness has taken the shape of benevolence." "I never told a lie," he told Dr. Bowring ; "I never, in my remembrance, did what I knew to be a dishonest thing."—ED.



have no key to. It is a barbarous philosophical jargon, with all the repetitions, formalities, uncouth nomenclature, and verbiage of law Latin; and what makes it worse, it is not mere verbiage, but has a great deal of acuteness and meaning in it, which you would be glad to pick out if you could.—*Hazlitt.*

He was a great and voluminous writer on metaphysical and political subjects, as well as on Jurisprudence; he strove for many years for what he considered the good of the people; and he almost died for the people, for he bequeathed his body to the dissectors, in order to benefit the science of anatomy.—*Chambers.*

Mr. Bentham is long; Mr. Bentham is occasionally involved and obscure; Mr. Bentham invents new and alarming expressions; Mr. Bentham loves division and subdivision—and he loves method itself more than its consequences. Those only therefore who know his originality, his knowledge, his vigour, his boldness, will recur to the work themselves. The great mass of readers will not purchase improvement at so dear a rate, but will choose rather to become acquainted with Mr. Bentham through the medium of reviews—after that eminent philosopher has been washed, trimmed, shaved, and forced into clean linen.—*Sydney Smith, "Reviews."*

Bentham lived next door. We used to see him, bustling away in his sort of half-running walk, in the garden. Both Hazlitt and I often looked with a longing eye from the windows of the room at the white-haired philosopher in his leafy shelter, his head the finest and most venerable ever placed on human shoulders. The awe which his admirers had of Bentham was carried so far as to make them think everything he said or thought a miracle. Once I remember he came to see (Leigh) Hunt in Surrey Gaol, and played battledore and shuttlecock with him. Hunt told me after of the prodigious power of Bentham's mind. "He proposed," said Hunt, "a reform in the handle of battledores." "Did he!" said I, with awful respect. "He did," said Hunt, "taking in everything, you see, like the elephant's trunk, which lifts alike a pin or twelve hundredweight." "Extraordinary," I echoed; and then Hunt would regard me, the artist, the mere artist, with the laurelled superiority becoming the poet—the Vates, as Byron called him.—*B. R. Haydon, "Memoirs."*

It is impossible to know Bentham, and to have witnessed

his benevolence, his disinterestedness, and the zeal with which he has devoted his whole life to the service of his fellow-creatures, without admiring and revering him.—*Sir S. Romilly, "Diary."*

Bentham would have preferred the glory of coming back once in every hundred years to witness the progress of his opinions ; but as his riper judgment had exorcised his imagination of its faith in ghosts, this was not a project to be relied upon. He was obliged therefore to put up with the nearest approximation he could think of to a posthumous participation in his fame. As usual with him, a love of mankind and an admiration of himself went hand in hand in his object and its details. The first thing to be done was to collect and enshrine his written wisdom—the spirit of the inner man ; for this nothing more was needed than a complete edition of his writings and a memoir of his life. . . . So far his preparations for immortality are not unlike what other people might have made—at least, such authors as are fortunate enough to leave behind them assets sufficient to command a printer. But Bentham was far too original to stop here. We have observed on his *buffa* humour for mixing the serious and ludicrous together. . . . He ordains by will that the form of his outward man should be kept together and preserved (as far as science can preserve our poor anatomies) in the attitude in which he sat when engaged in thought—his black coat, chair, and staff as usual ; and he suggests that his disciples should meet once a year or oftener, to commemorate the founder of the greatest happiness system of morals and legislation, on which occasion his executor is to wheel him in, to be stationed in such part of the room as to the assembled company shall seem meet.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1843.

## Charles James Fox.

1749–1806.

The great feature of his life was the long and unwearied opposition which he made to the low cunning, the profligate extravagance, the sycophant mediocrity, and the stupid obstinacy of the English court.—*Sydney Smith*.

Mr. Fox, though not an adept in the use of political wiles, was very unlikely to be the dupe of them. He was conversant in the ways of men, as well as in the contents of books. He

was acquainted with the peculiar language of states, their peculiar forms, and the grounds and effects of their peculiar usages. From his earliest youth he had investigated the science of politics in the greater and the smaller scale ; he had studied it in the records of history, both popular and rare—in the conferences of ambassadors—in the archives of royal cabinets—in the minuter detail of memoirs—and in collected or straggling anecdotes of the wrangles, intrigues, and cabals, which, springing up in the secret recesses of courts, shed their baleful influence on the determinations of sovereigns, the fortunes of favourites, and the tranquillity of kingdoms.—*Dr. Parr.*

Fox is a most extraordinary man : here is a man who has divided the kingdom with Cæsar ; so that it was a doubt whether the nation should be ruled by the sceptre of George the Third or the tongue of Fox.—*Johnson.*

Pitt I never heard ; Fox but once, and then he struck me as a debater, which to me seems as different from an orator as an improvisatore or a versifier from a poet.—*Byron.*<sup>1</sup>

When I became acquainted with Fox he had given up that kind of life entirely (*i.e.*, dissipation) and resided in the most perfect sobriety and regularity at St. Anne's Hill. There he was very happy, delighting in study, in rural occupations and rural prospects. He would break from a criticism on Porson's "Euripides" to look for the little pigs. I remember his calling out to the Chertsey Hills, when a thick mist, which had for some time concealed them, roiled away, "Good morning to you ! I am glad to see you again !" There was a walk in his grounds, which led to a lane through which the farmers used to pass ; and he would stop them and talk to them with great interest about the price of turnips, &c. I was one day with him in the Louvre, when he suddenly turned from the pictures, and looking out of the window, exclaimed, "This hot sun will burn up my turnips at St. Anne's Hill."—*Rogers.*

Fox, with a great hesitation in his elocution, and a barrenness of expression, had conquered these impediments and the prejudice they had raised against his speaking, by a vehemence of reasoning and a closeness of argument, that beat all the

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<sup>1</sup> Never in my life did I hear anything equal to Fox's *speeches in reply*—they were wonderful. Burke did not do himself justice as a speaker ; his manner was hurried, and he always seemed to be in a passion. Pitt's voice sounded as if he had worsted in his mouth.—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

orators of the time. His spirit, his steadiness, his humanity, procured him strong attachments, which, the more jealous he grew of Pitt, the more he cultivated.—“*Memoirs*,” by Horace Walpole.

Among the many great and striking endowments of Mr. Fox there is one in particular to which I cannot help adverting, and which I trust will still continue to animate all those who have admired him in public or loved him in private life. I mean that deep and intimate feeling for human nature, which has generally been estranged from the bosom of statesmen, but which was with him a part of his existence, ever actuating him to alleviate the evils, to vindicate the rights, to soften the calamities, and to increase by every means in his power the happiness of mankind. In this respect he is not lost to us. As long as our language remains his powerful effusions will continue to improve and enlighten his countrymen, and to diffuse a milder and more benevolent spirit, not only in the recesses of private life, but in the direction of nations and the intercourse of states.—“*Life of William Roscoe*.”

The great man whose mighty efforts in the cause of peace, of truth, and of liberty, have made that name immortal.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1834.

When he got fairly into his subject, was heartily warmed with it, he poured forth words and periods of fire that smote you, and deprived you of all power to reflect and rescue yourself, whilst he went on to seize the faculties of the listener, and carry them captive along with him whithersoever he pleased to rush. It is ridiculous to doubt that he was a far closer reasoner, a much more argumentative speaker, than Demosthenes.—*Ibid.*, 1838.

Mr. Fox wrote debates. . . . As far as mere diction was concerned, indeed, Mr. Fox did his best to avoid those faults which the habit of public speaking is likely to generate. He was so nervously apprehensive of sliding into some colloquial incorrectness, of debasing his style by a mixture of Parliamentary slang, that he ran into the opposite error, and purified his vocabulary with a scrupulosity unknown to any purist. *Ciceronem Allobroga dixit*. He would not allow Addison, Bolingbroke, or Middleton to be a sufficient authority for an expression. He declared that he would use no word which was not to be found in Dryden. In any other person we should have called this solicitude mere foppery; and in spite of

all our admiration for Mr. Fox, we cannot but think that his extreme attention to the petty niceties of language was hardly worthy of so manly and so capacious an understanding.—*Macaulay*.

I believe there never was a person yet created who had the faculty of reasoning like him. His judgments are never wrong; his decision is formed quicker than any man's I ever conversed with; and he never seems to mistake but in his own affairs.—*Lord Carlisle to George Selwyn*.<sup>1</sup>

In all other points of the orator, few men were less gifted than Fox. To the last day of his life he was not fluent; the perpetual practice of thirty years had not given him the mastery of the English language. He hesitated, was often at a loss for words, turned back upon his steps, and increased his embarrassment by his unwieldy efforts at extrication. All that belongs to attitude and exterior was entirely against him. But his singular faculty of throwing his feelings into his speech turned his very defects into sources of his success. When he had once seized on the popular sympathy, if he lost words, it was from his absorbing interest in his cause; if his arguments were perplexed, it was from the weight of his matter. The sudden failures of his voice, his ungainly gestures, and all his innumerable sins against oratorical dignity were attributed to a force of sincerity, which overpowered all his perception of minor things; the burst of a natural and swelling sensibility, which justly swept away the trifling observances, important only on trivial occasions and to trivial men. Fox has, more than once, shed tears in the House; a spectacle ridiculously frequent among foreigners, but so rare among the manlier minds of Englishmen that it only added to his triumph.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1835.

The great error of Fox, in the late years of opposition, appears to have consisted in that favourable expectation of the issue of the French Revolution which was natural to young and to speculative thinkers, but hardly to be permitted in a practised statesman. He felt too much, and reflected too little; perhaps he did not take sufficient pains to inquire into facts. He gave an indolent indulgence to his benevolent and great feelings. An error of an inferior appearance, but of fatal influence upon the Opposition party, was the countenance given to

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<sup>1</sup> When this was written Fox was eighteen years of age.—ED.

the Jacobin party in England by Mr. Fox. He was misled in this by some people about him; and by the persuasion, no doubt, that that powerful party might easily be restrained from excess, and in the meantime give effectual aid to the prevalence of popular sentiments. Fox was led, in this business, even by such an unworthy agent as Dennis O'Brien; who must have been the original, as Mackintosh remarked to me, of Burke's picture of the *go-between*, in the "Appeal from the Old to the New Whigs."—*Francis Horner*.

Fox's love of play was frightful; his best friends are said to have been half ruined in annuities, given by them as securities for him to the Jews. Five hundred thousand of such annuities, of Fox and his Society, were advertised to be sold at one time. Walpole wondered what Fox would do when he had sold the estates of all his friends. Here are some instances of his desperate play. Walpole further notes that in the debate on the Thirty-nine Articles, Fox did not shine, "nor could it be wondered at. He had sat up playing at hazard at Almack's from Tuesday evening, the 4th, until five in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 5th. An hour before he had recovered 12,000*l.* that he had lost, and by dinner, which was at five o'clock, he had ended in losing 11,000*l.* On the Thursday he spoke in the above debate; went to dinner at past eleven at night; thence to White's, where he drank till seven the next morning; thence to Almack's, where he won 6000*l.*, and between three and four in the afternoon he set out for Newmarket. His brother Stephen lost 11,000*l.* two nights after, and Charles 10,000*l.* more on the 13th: so that in three nights the two brothers, the eldest not twenty-five, lost 32,000*l.*"—*Timbs*.

## Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

1751-1816.

Mr. Sheridan's eloquence demanded my applause. —  
*Gibbon*.

He who has written the two best comedies of his age is surely  
a considerable man.—*Johnson*.

The orator, dramatist, minstrel, who ran  
Through each mode of the lyre, and was master of all;

Whose mind was an essence compounded with art  
 From the finest and best of all other men's powers;  
 Who rul'd like a wizard the world of the heart,  
 And could call up its sunshine or bring down its showers.

*Moore.*

His is the true style—something between poetry and prose,  
 and better than either.—*Burke.*

The English Hyperides.—*Macaulay.*

Sheridan is laboured and polished; you always see the marks of the chisel and hatchet about him. Curran is a rich and glittering ore, which is raised from the mine without effort, and in the most exuberant profusion.<sup>1</sup>—*Horne Tooke.*

<sup>1</sup> John Philpot Curran. He was called to the Irish Bar in 1775, and died October 16th, 1817. Tom Moore used to say that Curran was far above Grattan in wit and genius, but still further below him in real wisdom. He has no literary claims, the few verses with which he has been accredited being mediocre. A single exception may perhaps be allowed:—

“O'er the desert of life, where you vainly pursued  
 Those phantoms of hope which their promise disown,  
 Have you e'er met some spirit, divinely endued,  
 That so kindly could say, you don't suffer alone?  
 And however your fate may have smil'd or have frown'd,  
 Will she deign still to share as the friend or the wife?  
 Then make her the pulse of your heart, for you've found  
 The green spot that blooms o'er the desert of life.”

In a “Life of Curran” now before me each page is loaded with anecdotes, which the admiring biographer diligently collected as illustrations of Curran's wit. That Curran's eloquence was equal to Burke's, his wit equal to Sheridan's, his forensic genius equal to Erskine's, is proved by the suffrages of his contemporaries, and must be allowed by all who read his speeches, and who follow the result of his pleading. It was regretted, however, by Samuel Rogers that Moore, who was the recipient of Curran's best sayings, had not taken the trouble to record them. The omission is certainly injurious to Curran's reputation as a wit, for of the pile of anecdotes before me I can really find nothing that exhibits Curran with more intelligence than might be displayed by a second-rate joker. Yet such were his incessant drolleries, that a black servant on determining to quit his service gave as an excuse, “Massa, I cannot live longer with you; you make me laugh too much. I am losing my health with you.” Of the collection of *ana* before me the reader shall have a few specimens:—Mr. Hoare's countenance was grave and solemn; he rarely smiled; and if he smiled, it was a smile that seemed to rebuke the spirit that prompted it. Curran, once observing a twinkle to enliven his eye, remarked, “Whenever I see smiles on Hoare's face I think they are like tin clasps on an oak coffin.”—Once, at a rehearsal for a concert, he perceived the proceedings to be constantly interrupted by the useless activity of a gentleman who

Sheridan worked very hard when he had to prepare himself for any great occasion. His habit was on these emergencies to rise at four in the morning, to light up a prodigious quantity of candles around him, and eat toasted muffins while he worked.—*Tierney*.

The great charm of Sheridan's speaking was his multifariousness of style.—*Sydney Smith*.

Notwithstanding his passion for Miss Lindley, and his grief for the death of his father (who had ill-used him), I question Sheridan's having a good heart really. . . . Publicly he acted once or twice with grandeur and principle; but grandeur of public principle is not incompatible with private immorality.—*Haydon*.

In society I have met Sheridan frequently. He was superb ! I have seen him cut up Whitbread, quiz Madame de Staël, annihilate Colman, and do little less by some others of good fame and ability. I have met him at all places and parties—at Whitehall with the Melbournes, at the Marquis of Tavistock's, at Robins, the auctioneer's, at Sir Humphrey Davy's, at Sam

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conceived himself of the utmost possible importance in the assembly. "Mark that fellow," said Curran, "he is like the fool who blows the bellows for the organist, and because he does so, he thinks it is himself who performs upon the instrument."—Of some person who voted for the Union, and owed his elevation to his vote, he observed "That he was the foulest bird that ever perched upon the ruins of a broken constitution."—A barrister entered the hall with his wig very much awry. So much bantering ensued that he turned to Curran. "Do you see anything ridiculous in my wig, sir?" "Nothing but the head," answered Curran.—Stopping at an inn one morning to breakfast, and perceiving everything unpromising, he said to the waiter, "I regret to learn that this house has fallen very much back, very much indeed. Yet I remember myself cheered and refreshed by its hospitality. It was a clean and neat retreat; but report now asserts that your hens do not *lay fresh eggs*!" The price of the waiter was alarmed, and the very freshest of eggs were procured to prove to Curran that the hens were still loyal to their traditions.—The elder Mathews' portraiture of Curran was one of the most successful imitations of that eminent mimic. In connexion with this imitation an odd thing is told. Calling one day on a lady at Fulham who was intimate with Curran, Mathews addressed her in the tone and manner of the eloquent Irishman. The lady, with visible embarrassment, endeavoured to check him; Mathews persisted in his mimicking. Suddenly a loud scream broke from an adjoining room. On the folding-doors being thrown open a lady was seen in hysterics on the sofa. She proved to be Mrs. Curran, who had been separated some years from her husband. Her alarm and distress on being convinced that her husband was so near her were the cause of the hysterics.—*Ed.*



Rogers's—in short, in most kinds of company, and always found him convivial and delightful.—*Byron.*

Mathews (Charles) assures me that Sheridan was very dull in society, and sat sullen and silent, swallowing glass after glass, rather a hindrance than a help; but there was a time when he broke out with a resumption of what had been going on, done with great force, and generally attacking some person in the company, and some opinions which he had expressed.—*Scott's "Diary."*

He was seldom agreeable in the presence of actors; before them his cheerfulness and mirth (if they existed at the period to which I allude) never appeared. He always entered his own theatre as if stealthily and unwillingly, and his appearance among his performers never failed to act like a dark cloud.—*"Life of Mathews."*

I prefer Sheridan's "Rivals," to his "School for Scandal;" exquisite humour pleases me more than the finest wit.—*Rogers.*

He possessed a ductility and versatility of talents which no public man in our time has equalled; and these intellectual endowments were sustained by a suavity of temper which seemed to set at defiance all attempts to ruffle or discompose it. Playing with his irritable or angry antagonist, Sheridan exposed him by sallies of wit, or attacked him by classic elegance of satire; performing this arduous task in the face of a crowded assembly without losing for an instant either his presence of mind, his facility of expression, or his good humour. He wounded deepest, indeed, when he smiled, and convulsed his hearers with laughter, while the object of his ridicule or animadversion was twisting under the lash. Pitt and Dundas, who presented the finest marks for his attack, found by experience that though they might repel, they could not confound, and still less could they silence or vanquish him. In every attempt that they made by introducing personalities, or illiberal reflections on his private life and literary or dramatic occupations, to disconcert him, he turned their weapons on themselves. Nor did he while thus chastising his adversary alter a muscle of his own countenance, which, as well as his gestures, seemed to participate and display the unalterable severity of his intellectual formation. Rarely did he elevate his voice, and never except in subservience to the dictates of his judgment with the view to produce a corresponding effect on his audience. Yet he was always heard, generally listened to with eagerness, and could obtain a hearing

at almost any hour. Burke, who wanted Sheridan's nice tact and his amenity of manner, was continually coughed down, and on those occasions lost his temper. Even Fox often tired the House by the repetitions which he introduced into his speeches. Sheridan never abused their patience. Whenever he rose they anticipated a rich repast of wit without acrimony, seasoned by allusions and citations the most delicate yet obvious in their application.—*Wraxall's "Posthumous Memoirs."*<sup>1</sup>

The natural bent of his genius was plainly to splendid and glowing imagery, and if it had been fostered by serious study or scholastic discipline, would probably have led to the adoption of a florid, lofty, and perhaps bombastic style—extremely remote, at all events, from the colloquial familiarity which is indispensable to the diction or even the existence of comedy.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1826.

## Madame D'Arblay.

1752–1840.

Miss Burney did for the English novel what Jeremy Collier did for the English drama; and she did it in a better way. She first showed that a tale might be written in which both the fashionable and the vulgar life of London might be exhibited with great force, and with broad comic humour, and which yet should not contain a single line inconsistent with rigid morality or even with virgin delicacy. She took away the reproach which lay on a most useful and delightful species of composi-

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<sup>1</sup> I transcribe the following passage from the *Quarterly Review* on Sir Nathaniel Wraxall:—"Sir Nathaniel may be, and we believe is, in private society, a good-natured gentleman, and a man quite above practising any premeditated deception; but his *work* is as far from deserving a character of good-nature as of veracity. It is not a sufficient justification of his moral character, that he does not mean to deceive, and that where he leads his reader astray he has himself been previously misled. We think that a writer is under no inconsiderable responsibility in his moral character, to set down as *fact*, no more than he *knows*: for the injury to private feeling and public confidence is quite as great from his presumptuous ignorance as it would be from absolute falsehood or malice. The fables of Sir Nathaniel are now capable of detection, but the detection will not accompany them down to posterity; and we even doubt whether the conviction of Sir Nathaniel for a libel, if it should occur, will reach many readers who, fifty years hence, may chance to pick up Wraxall's "*History of My Own Time*."—*Quarterly Review*, vol. xiii. p. 215.

tion. She vindicated the right of her sex to an equal share in a fair and noble province of letters.—*Macaulay*.

Was introduced by Rogers to Madame D'Arblay, the celebrated authoress of "Evelina" and "Cecilia"—an elderly lady, with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, a pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently quick feelings.<sup>1</sup> She told me she had wished to see two persons—myself, of course, being one, the other, George Canning. This was really a compliment to be pleased with—a nice little handsome pat of butter, made up by a neat-handed Phillis of a dairy-maid, instead of the grease, fit only for cart-wheels, which one is dosed with by the pound. Madame D'Arblay told us that the common story of Dr. Burney, her father, having brought home her own first work, and recommended it to her perusal, was erroneous. Her father was in the secret of "Evelina" being printed. But the following circumstance may have given rise to the story:—Dr. Burney was at Streatham soon after the publication, where he found Mrs. Thrale recovering from her confinement, low at the moment, and out of spirits. While they were talking together, Johnson, who sat beside in a kind of reverie, suddenly broke out, "You should read this new work, madam—you should read 'Evelina'; every one says it is excellent, and they are right." The delighted father obtained a commission from Mrs. Thrale to purchase his daughter's work and retired the happiest of men. Madame D'Arblay said she was wild with joy at this decisive evidence of her literary success, and that she could only give vent to her rapture by dancing and skipping round a mulberry-tree in the garden. She was very young at this time.<sup>2</sup>—*Sir Walter Scott*.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1812 Miss Berry met Mad. D'Arblay, and thus records her impressions:—"At last Madame D'Arblay arrived. I was very glad to see her again. She is wonderfully improved in good looks in ten years, which have usually a very different effect at an age when people begin to fall off. Her face has acquired expression and a charm which it never had before. She has gained an *embonpoint* very advantageous to her face. We did not talk much about France, but with her intelligence there was a great deal she could tell, and much she could not, having a husband and a French establishment, to which she was to return after the winter."—*Miss Berry's "Journal."*

<sup>2</sup> No stress is to be laid on Madame D'Arblay's statements. When "Evelina" appeared it was reported as the work of a girl aged seventeen. Miss Burney did not contradict the rumour, though, as it was afterwards discovered, her age was *twenty-seven*—"an important difference," Croker

"Evelina" appeared on the close of January. It was soon the talk of the town. A novel, painting manners truly and pleasantly, with characters studied from life, and showing some range of social observation and humour, without licentiousness or coarseness, was at that time a phenomenon. Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett had passed away: the first was long-winded, and was beginning to be thought dull; the other two were voted low, and above all, were "taboo" to ladies who valued their reputation for propriety. The novels of the day were wretched farragos of stilted sentimentality and high-flown commonplace. Warburton managed to read them, it is said. But apart from some peculiar idiosyncrasy, it is difficult to conceive any of the men or women of Sir Joshua's circle interesting themselves in any novel published in the ten years before "Evelina" came out. And now here was a work which riveted Burke and Sir Joshua; threw Johnson, old, sad, and hypochondriac as he was, into fits of admiration and laughter; made Sheridan dread a rival in the field; and extorted honest compliments from Gibbon, in the full flush of his own reputation. Its phrases became catch-words among the wits and blues; its characters were accepted as real types; and their names affixed to originals in all sorts of society. The Miss Palmers told Miss Burney, and Miss Reynolds confirmed the story, how Sir Joshua, who began the book one day, when he was too much engaged to go on with it, was so much caught that he could think of nothing else, and was quite absent all the day, not knowing a word that was said to him; and when he took it up again found himself so much interested that he sat up all night to finish it.—*Leslie's "Life of Reynolds."*

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rightly says. We still find her repeating to Walter Scott, forty-eight years afterwards, that "she was very young at the time." Surely a woman aged twenty-seven is not "very" young! With reference to the above story, Johnson is not likely to have said "every *one* says it is excellent, and *they* are right." Croker is undoubtedly just when he says, speaking of her novels, "they owed a great deal of their extraordinary success to the strange misrepresentation that had been somehow made, of the author's being ten years younger than she really was."—ED.

## Thomas Chatterton.

1752-1770.

He must rank as an universal genius, above Dryden, and perhaps only second to Shakspeare.—*Dr. Gregory.*

A prodigy of genius.—*Warton.*

The greatest genius England has produced since the days of Shakspeare.—*Malone.*

My memory does not supply me with any human being who, at such an age, with such disadvantages, has produced such compositions. Under the heathen mythology, superstition and admiration would have explained all by bringing Apollo on earth; nor would the god ever have descended with more credit to himself.—*Croft.*

Insignificant as it may seem, the determination of this question (*i.e.*, the authenticity of the Rowley poems) affects the great lines of the history of poetry, and even of general literature. If it should at last be decided that these poems were really written so early as the reign of King Edward IV., the entire system that hath been framed concerning the prepossession of poetical composition, and every theory that has been established on the gradual improvement of taste, style, and language, will be shaken and disarranged.—*Dr. Warton.*

I interrogated him as to the object of his views and expectations, and what mode of life he intended to pursue on his arrival in London. His answer was remarkable. "My first attempt," said he, "shall be in the literary way; the promises I have received are sufficient to dispel doubt; but should I, contrary to my expectation, find myself deceived, I will in that case, turn Methodist preacher. Credulity is as potent a deity as ever, and a new sect may easily be devised. But if that too should fail me, my last and final resource is a pistol."—*Thistlethwaite.*

His person, like his genius, was premature. He had a manliness and dignity beyond his years, and there was something about him uncommonly prepossessing. His most remarkable feature was his eyes, which though grey, were uncommonly piercing. When he was warmed in argument or otherwise they sparkled with fire; and one eye it is said, was still more remarkable than the other.—*Dr. Anderson.*

Nothing in Chatterton can be separated from Chatterton.

His noblest flights, his sweetest strains, his grossest ribaldry, and his most commonplace imitations of the productions of magazines, were all the effervescences of the same ungovernable impulse, which cameleon-like, imbibed the colours of all it looked on. It was Ossian, or a Saxon monk, or Gray, or Smollett, or Junius; and if it failed most in what it affected most, to be a poet of the fifteenth century, it was because it could not imitate what had not existed.—*Lord Orford*.<sup>1</sup>

Chatterton's was a genius like that of Homer and Shakspeare, which appears not above once in many centuries.—*Vicesimus Knox*.

Mad, I think.—*Byron*.

This is the most extraordinary young man that has encountered my knowledge. It is wonderful how the whelp has written such things.—*Johnson*.

The young-cy'd Poesy  
All deftly masked as hoar antiquity.—*Coleridge*.

Sweet harper of time-shrouded minstrelsy.—*Ibid*.

All think now Chatterton is dead his works are worth preserving; yet no one when he was alive would keep the bard from starving.—*Rolliad*, 1785.

He set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon poems*—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as any of his misty stars is to another.—*Wordsworth*.

The boy whom once patrician pens adorn'd,  
First meanly flatter'd, then as meanly scorn'd.—*Matthias*.

In Severn's vale, a wan and moonstruck boy  
Sought by the daisy's side a pensive joy;  
Held converse with the sea-birds as they passed,  
And strange and dire communion with the blast;

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<sup>1</sup> In some letters of Walpole, printed in Miss Berry's "Correspondence," further allusion is made to Chatterton: "He was too young," writes Walpole, "and had too much parts, to have attained that summit of antiquarian excellence, the dull accuracy of dates, and consequently his forgeries were ill-adapted to the barbarous style and narrow discoveries of the dark ages for which he pretended to model his discoveries. He attributed beautiful imagery to monks who had no imagination, and antedated arts by whole centuries, in which ingenious discoveries would have been imputed to magic sooner than to genius." This learned fluency comes readily enough now (1794); but it makes his previous credulity appear somewhat contemptible, as he makes no reference to Gray, or Warton, or Mason, who were all the real illuminators of his ignorance.—ED.

And read in sunbeams and the starry sky  
 The golden language of eternity.  
 Age saw him and looked sad ; the young men smiled,  
 And wondering maidens shunn'd his aspect wild ;  
 But He—the ever kind, the ever wise,  
 Who sees through fate with omnipresent eyes,  
 Hid from the mother while she bless'd her son  
 The woes of genius and of Chatterton.—*E. Elliott.*

Ah ! why for genius' headstrong rage  
 Did virtue's hand no curb prepare ?  
 What boots, poor youth, that now thy page  
 Can boast the public praise to share—  
 The learn'd in deep research engage,  
 And lightly entertain the gentle fair?—*J. Scott.*

## William Roscoe.

1753-1831.

Mr. Roscoe is, I think, by far the best of our historians, both for beauty of style, and for deep reflections ; and his translations of poetry are equal to the originals.—*Lord Orford.*

The Muses, starting from their trance, revive,  
 And, at their Roscoe's bidding, wake and live.—*Matthias.*<sup>1</sup>

You have thrown the clearest and fullest light upon a period most interesting to every scholar. You have produced much that was unknown, and to that which was known you have given order, perspicuity, and grace. You have shown the greatest diligence in your researches, and the purest taste in your selection ; and upon the characters and events which passed in review before your inquisitive and discriminating mind, you have united a sagacity of observation with correctness, elegance, and vigour of style.—*Dr. Parr.*

Nature had done much for him, but he did more for himself.

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<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Matthias was a man of small stature, of fine intelligent features, but of a sarcastic expression. Had he been more attenuated, more animated, yet somewhat paler and more thoughtful, his eyes larger and more fit for reserving light to flash out in the excitement of animated conversation, he might be said to resemble Lamennais." Of this portrait (by Dr. Madden) of a man once celebrated for a poem called "The Pursuits of Literature," the reader must make what he can.—*ED.*

He never abused her gifts ; he employed them with a gratitude, a devotion, an unwearied strength and labour, and dispensed their fruits with lavish hand, in a love of mankind which ceased only with his being on earth.—*T. Roscoe.*

He writes in an easier style (though not without affectation), and is more decent in his narrative, than Gibbon ; still he is of that school, and appears to have taken him for his model, so fine a thing it seems to our present compilers of history to have and to profess to have no religion. As to politics, he outruns his original, and is for liberty in its widest range, or what the French call Jacobinical. But what then ? The abundant crop of orators, statesmen, and heroes that spring up in a (mob) government, such as that of Florence and of Athens, the study of the fine arts, and a paganized or atheistic philosophy, are to make amends for all further defects, and to put us out of conceit with order, plain sense, and Christianity.—*Dr. Hurd.*

The sensation caused by the life of the great prince merchant of Tuscany<sup>1</sup> suddenly appearing to enlighten the literary hemisphere is still remembered by many. Criticism was dumb, men had only time to be gratified ; and at a period when the dignity of the senate, even of its Lower Chamber, never allowed any allusion to contemporary productions of the press, a peer (the late Marquis of Lansdowne), who had twice been minister, and was still a great party chief, begged their lordships to devote as much time as they might be able to spare from "Lorenzo de' Medici" to the study of an important state affair.—*Lord Brougham.*

Twenty years and five have flown since we walked among the "alleys green" of Allerton, with William Roscoe the elder ; and who ever conversed with him for a few hours in and about his own home, where the stream of life flowed on so full and clear, without carrying away impressions that never seemed to become remembrances ! So vivid had they remained amidst the obscurations and obliterations of time that sweeps with its wings all that lies on the surface of the soul, but has no power to disturb, much less destroy, the records printed on the heart's core—imperishable even here, and hereafter to be brightened, we believe, into a splendour far exceeding what could have belonged to them in this fluctuating life !—*Blackwood's Magazine, 1835.*

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<sup>1</sup> Roscoe's "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici."



## Elizabeth Inchbald.

1753-1821.

## DESCRIPTION OF ME.

**Age**—Between 30 and 40, which, in the register of a lady's birth, means a little turned of 30.

**Height**—Above the middle size and rather tall.

**Figure**—Handsome and striking in its general air, but a little too stiff and erect.

**Shape**—Rather too fond of sharp angles.

**Skin**—By nature fair, though a little freckled, and with a tinge of sand, which is the colour of her eyelashes, but made coarse by ill treatment upon her cheeks and arms.

**Bosom**—None ; or so diminutive that it's like a needle in a bottle of hay.

**Hair**—Of a sandy auburn, and rather too straight as well as thin.

**Face**—Beautiful in effect and beautiful in every feature.

**Countenance**—Full of spirit and sweetness ; excessively interesting, and, without indelicacy, voluptuous.

**Dress**—Always becoming ; and very seldom worth so much as eightpence.—*Mrs. Inchbald.*<sup>1</sup>

I cannot pay you a compliment in verse too high for what I truly think of you in prose . . . you must receive esteem instead of flattery, and sincerity for wit, when I swear there is no WOMAN I more truly admire, nor any MAN whose abilities I more truly esteem.—*J. P. Kemble.*

Eliza, when with female art,  
 You seem to shun and yet pursue,  
 You act a false, a soul-less part,  
 Unworthy love, unworthy you!  
 Reluctance kills the rising bliss ;  
 Half granted favours I disdain  
 The honey'd lips that I would kiss  
 Are gall, unless they kiss again.

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<sup>1</sup> I give this description of herself to Mrs. Inchbald, because, though the epitome of her beauties was drawn up by a friend, she endorsed with her name the paper on which it was written.—ED.

No passive love, that silent takes  
 All I can give without return ;  
 Be mine the frame that passion shakes,  
 The liquid eye, the lips that burn.  
 Desires that mantle in the face,  
 Wishes that wait not to be won :  
 The living, dying, rapt embrace—  
 Give those delights, or give me none.—*Dr. Wolcot.*

I have just been reading for the third—I believe for the fourth time—the “Simple Story.” Its effects upon my feelings were as powerful as at the first reading ; I never read *any* novel—I except *none*—I never read any novel that affected me so strongly, or that so completely possessed me with the belief in the real existence of all the people it represents. I never once recollected the author whilst I was reading it ; never said or thought *that's a fine sentiment*—or *that is well expressed*—or *that is well invented*. I believed all to be real.—*Maria Edgeworth.*

The “Simple Story,” two-thirds of it at least, is superior, in truth of delineation and strength of character, to Maria's or any other writing.—*R. L. Edgeworth.*

Her conversation was easy and animated. Her curiosity was not such as is (blasphemously) imputed to her sex. Yet she was inquisitive. Never did an antiquated matron trace a tale of scandal through all its meanders of authority with more undeviating eagerness than our heroine hunted out a new source of useful information. Her school was society : to which she gratefully returned as an instructress what she had gathered as a scholar. Her passion was the contemplation of superior excellence ; and though her personal charms secured her admirers which flattered her as a woman, she preferred the homage of the mind in her higher character of a woman of genius.—*Charles Moore.*

To those who remember her in private she seemed to possess many of the qualities of Swift : like the Dean, she told a story in an admirable manner ; she absolutely painted while she spoke, and her language started into life. Her sentences, like his, were short and perspicuous ; her observations piercing. She too had seen much of the world, and had profited from the experience. She had not the least tincture of vanity in her conversation, and in truth was too proud to be vain. She was

decidedly polite, but in a manner entirely her own.—*James Boaden*.<sup>1</sup>

I called with Mrs. H—— and Amelia on Mrs. Inchbald. I like her vastly; she seems so clever and interesting.—*Elizabeth Fry*.

## George Crabbe.

1754–1832.

His noble forehead, his bright beaming eye, without anything of old age about it—though he was then, I presume, about seventy—his sweet, and I would say, innocent smile, and the calm mellow tones of his voice, all are reproduced the moment I open any page of his poetry; and how much better have I understood and enjoyed his poetry since I was able thus to connect with it the living presence of the man!—*Lockhart*.

He would put off a meditated journey rather than leave a poor parishioner who required his services; and from his knowledge of human nature he was able, and in a remarkable manner, to throw himself into the circumstances of those who needed his help—*no sympathy was like his*.—*Chambers*.

True bard! and simple as the race  
Of true-born poets ever are.—*Moore*.

I do not doubt of Mr. Crabbe's success.—*Dr. Johnson*.

I consider Crabbe and Coleridge as the first of these times in point of genius.—*Byron*.

Crabbe is always an instructive and forceful, almost always even an interesting writer. His works have an imperishable value as records of his time; and it even may be said that few parts of them but would have found an appropriate place in some of the reports of our various commissions for inquiring into the state of the country. Observation, prudence, acuteness, uprightness, self-balancing vigour of mind are everywhere seen, and are exerted on the whole wide field of common life. All that is wanting is the enthusiastic sympathy, the jubilant

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<sup>1</sup> "Boaden, the author of the 'Life of Kemble,' 'Mrs. Siddons,' 'Mrs. Inchbald,' &c., was the editor of the *Oracle*, and a celebrated dramatic critic. He was enthusiastically devoted to the Kemble family, and on terms of intimacy with 'glorious John.'"—"*Memoirs of Charles Mathews*."

love, whose utterance is melody, and without which all art is little better than a laborious ploughing of the land, and then sowing the land itself for seed along the fruitless furrow.—*Quarterly Review.*

George Crabbe was not merely a poet, but a poet who had the sagacity to see into the real state of things and the heart to do his duty. . . . To him popular education, popular freedom, popular advance into knowledge and power, owe a debt which futurity will gratefully acknowledge, but no time can cancel.—*W. Howitt.*

Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires,  
And decorate the verse herself inspires :  
This fact in virtue's name let Crabbe attest—  
Though Nature's sternest painter, yet the best.

*Byron.*

Talking of Wordsworth, Jeffrey told Anne a story, the object of which, as she understood it, was to show that Crabbe had no imagination. Crabbe, Sir George Beaumont, and Wordsworth were sitting together in Murray's room in Albemarle Street. Sir George, after sealing a letter, blew out the candle which had enabled him to do so, and exchanging a look with Wordsworth, began to admire in silence the undulating thread of smoke which slowly arose from the expiring wick, when Crabbe put on the extinguisher.—*Sir W. Scott.*

He has the mind and feelings of a gentleman.—*Burke.*

The first time I met Mr. Crabbe was at Holland House, where he and Tom Moore and myself lounged the better part of a morning about the park and library ; and I can answer for one of the party at least being very well pleased with it. Our conversation, I remember, was about novelists. Your father was a strong Fieldingite, and I as sturdy a Smollettite. His mildness in literary argument struck me with surprise in so stern a poet of nature, and I could not but contrast the unassumingness of his manners with the originality of his powers. In what may be called the ready-money small-talk of conversation, his facility might not perhaps seem equal to the known calibre of his talents ; but in the progress of conversation I recollect remarking that there was a vigilant shrewdness that almost eluded you by keeping its watch so quietly. Though an oldish man when I saw him, he was not a "*laudator temporis acti*," but a decided lover of later times. — *Thomas Campbell.*

You ask me of Crabbe's "Tales of the Hall?" What shall I say of his merits, when I begin by confessing that his very faults delight me? All his quaintness, his elaborate minuteness, and his oddities of style, come to my sight like the moles and freckles in a dear friend's face which I should be sorry to see removed.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

Teniers, Hogarth, Wilkie—each of them in his own art is a great master too; but in conception, in comprehension, and in breadth and depth of colouring, Crabbe was greater than them all three—could you conceive them all three in one; and then what is painting compared to poetry?—*Blackwood, 1834.*

Crabbe takes his hideous mistress in his arms, and she rewards him with her confidence by telling him all her dreadful secrets. The severity of his style is an accident belonging not to him, but to the majesty of his unparalleled subject. Hence it is that the unhappy people of the United States of America cannot bear to read Crabbe. They think him unnatural, and he is so to them, for in their wretched country cottagers are not paupers—marriage is not synonymous with misery.—*Ebenzer Elliott.*

## William Godwin.

1756–1836.

Mr. Coleridge, in writing an harmonious stanza, would stop to consider whether there was not more grace and beauty in a *pas de trois*, and would not proceed till he had resolved this question by a chain of metaphysical reasoning without end. Not so Mr. Godwin. That is best to him which he can do best. He does not waste himself in vain aspirations and effeminate sympathies. He is blind, deaf, insensible to all but the trump of Fame. Plays, operas, painting, music, ball-rooms, wealth, fashion, titles, lords, ladies, touch him not—all these are no more to him than to the anchorite in his cell, and he writes on to the end of the chapter, through good report and evil report. *Pingo in eternitatem*—is his motto. He neither envies nor admires what others are, but is contented to be what he is, and strives to do the utmost he can. Mr. Coleridge has flirted with the Muses as with a set of mistresses; Mr. Godwin has been married twice, to Reason and to Fancy, and has to boast no short-lived progeny by each. So to speak, he has

*valves* belonging to his mind to regulate the quantity of gas admitted into it, so that, like the bare, unsightly, but well-compacted steam-vessel, it cuts its liquid way, and arrives at its promised end: while Mr. Coleridge's bark, "taught with the little nautilus to sail," the sport of every breath, dancing to every wave,

"Youth at its prow, and Pleasure at its helm,"

flutters its gaudy pennons in the air, glitters in the sun, but we wait in vain to hear of its arrival in the destined harbour! Mr. Godwin, with less variety and vividness, with less subtlety and susceptibility both of thought and feeling, has had firmer nerves, a more determined purpose, a more comprehensive grasp of his subject, and the results are as we find them. Each has met with his reward, for justice has, after all, been done to the pretensions of each, and we must, in all cases, use means to ends!—*Hazlitt*, "*Spirit of the Age*."

It is worth knowing (in order to trace the history and progress of the intellectual character) that the author of "Political Justice," and "Caleb Williams," commenced his career as a dissenting clergyman; and the bookstalls sometimes present a volume of sermons by him, and we believe an English grammar.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1830.

I have been reading (for the little I could read) a new novel of Godwin's in four vols., called "The Travels of St. Leon." It is an odd work, like all his, and like all his, interesting, though hardly ever pleasantly so; and while one's head often agrees with his observations, and sometimes with his reasoning, never does one's heart thoroughly agree with his sentiments on any subject or on any character. He now *allows* that the social affections may be cultivated to advantage in human life, and upon this plan his present novel is formed. I should tell you, which I know from Edwards, that it was written for bread, agreed for by the booksellers beforehand, and actually composed and written as the printers wanted it.—*Miss Berry's "Correspondence."*

William Gifford.

1757-1826.

Looking through a number of the *Quarterly Review* one day at Brooks's, soon after its first appearance, Sheridan said, in

reply to a gentleman who observed that the editor, Mr. Gifford, had boasted of the power of conferring and distributing literary reputation, "Very likely; and in the present instance I think he has done it so profusely as to leave none for himself."—*John Timbs.*

Mr. Gifford is not only the first satirist of the day, but editor of one of the principal Reviews.<sup>1</sup>—*Byron.*

Called upon Gifford, editor of the *Quarterly*, have known him long, but forbore from calling on him ever since I meditated "Lalla Rookh," lest it might look like trying to propitiate his criticism. The mildest man in the world until he takes a pen in his hand, but then all gall and bitterness.—*Thomas Moore.*

I observe in the papers my old friend Gifford's funeral. He was a man of rare attainments and many excellent qualities. His Juvenal is one of the best versions ever made of a classical author, and his satire of the Baviad and Mæviad squabashed at one blow a set of coxcombs who might have humbugged the world long enough. As a commentator he was capital, could he but have suppressed his rancours against those who had preceded him in the task; but a misconstruction or a misinterpretation, nay, the misplacing of a comma, was, in Gifford's eyes, a crime worthy of the most severe animadversion. The same fault of extreme severity went through his critical labours, and in general he flagellated with so little pity, that people lost their sense of the criminal's guilt in dislike of the savage pleasure which the executioner seemed to take in inflicting the punishment. This lack of temper probably arose from indifferent health, for he was very valetudinary, and realized two verses wherein he says Fortune assigned him—

"One eye not over good,  
Two sides that to their cost have stood

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<sup>1</sup> This is as good as Pope's famous

"Blest as thou art with all the power of words,  
So lov'd, so honour'd in the House of Lords."

Elsewhere Byron writes, "Jeffrey and Gifford I take to be the monarch-makers in prose and poetry." Here we probably have the secret of his admiration for a man whose satires are duller than Shadwell's, and whose judgment was such that had Byron adopted it, some of the noblest passages in the poet's finest compositions would have been struck out.—ED.

A ten years' hectic cough ;  
Aches, stitches, all the various ills  
That swell the devilish doctor's bills,  
And sweep poor mortals off."

But he might also justly claim as his gift the moral qualities expressed in the next fine stanza—

"A soul  
That spurns the crowd's malign control,  
A firm contempt of wrong ;  
Spirits above affliction's power,  
And skill to soothe the lingering hour  
With no inglorious wrong."

He was a little man, dumpled up together, and so ill made as to seem almost deformed, but with a singular expression of talent in his countenance. Though so little of an athlete he nevertheless beat off Dr. Wolcot, when that celebrated person, the most unsparing calumniator of his time, chose to be offended with Gifford for satirizing him in his turn. Peter Pindar made a most vehement attack, but Gifford had the best of the affray, and I think remained in triumphant possession of the field of action and of the assailant's cane. G. had one singular custom. He used always to have a duenna of a housekeeper to sit in his study with him while he wrote. This female companion died when I was in London, and his distress was extreme. I afterwards heard he got her place supplied. I believe there was no scandal in all this.—*Sir W. Scott.*

Mr. Gifford, who considered as a poet, was merely Pope without Pope's wit and fancy, and whose satires are decidedly inferior in vigour and poignancy to the very imperfect juvenile performance of Lord Byron.—*Macaulay.*

## Robert Burns.

1759-1796.

In conversation he was powerful. His conceptions and expressions were of corresponding vigour, and on all subjects were as remote as possible from commonplaces.—*Professor Walker.*

I was bred to the plough, and am independent.—*Burns.*



What poet now shall tread  
 Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,  
 Since he, the sweetest bard, is dead  
 That ever breath'd the soothing strain?—*Roscoe.*

The *rank* of Burns is the very first of his art.—*Byron.*

I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is bright, but shut up in a dark lantern.—*Cowper.*

Robert Burns was wholly unskilled in music; yet the rare art of adapting words successfully to notes, of wedding verse in congenial unity with melody which, were it not for his example, I should say none but a poet versed in the sister-art ought to attempt, has yet by him, with the aid of a music to which my own country's strains are alone comparable, been exercised with so workmanly a hand, and with so rich a variety of passion, playfulness, and power, as no song-writer perhaps but himself has ever yet displayed.—*Thomas Moore.*

Him in his clay-built cot, the muse  
 Entranc'd, and show'd him all the forms  
 Of fairy light and wizard gloom  
 (That only gifted poet views),  
 The Genii of the floods and storms,  
 And martial shades from Glory's tomb.—*Campbell.*

Ghost of Mæcenas! hide thy blushing face!  
 They snatch'd him from the sickle and the plough. . . .  
 To gauge ale-firkins!—*Coleridge.*

Robert Burns has indited many songs that slip into the heart, just like light, no one knows how, filling its chambers sweetly and silently, and leaving it nothing more to desire for perfect contentment. Or let us say, sometimes when he sings, it is like listening to a linnet in the broom, a blackbird in the brake, or laverock in the sky. They sing in the fulness of their joy as nature teaches them,—and so did he; and the man, woman, or child, who is delighted not with such singing, be their virtues what they may, must never hope to be in heaven.—*Professor Wilson.*

In Scotia's choir  
 Of minstrels great and small,  
 He sprang, from his spontaneous fire,  
 The Phoenix of them all.—*James Montgomery.*

His person was strong and robust, his manners rustic, not clownish ; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school—*i.e.*, none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments ; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical temperament. It was large and of a dark cast, and glowed (I say literally glowed) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men in my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence without the slightest presumption.—*Sir Walter Scott.*

The world are agreed about the character and genius of Burns. None but the most narrow-minded bigots think of his errors and frailties but with sympathy and indulgence ; none but the blindest enthusiasts can deny their existence. It is very possible that his biographers and critics may have occasionally used epithets and expressions too peremptory and decisive ; but on the whole, the character of the bard has had ample justice. There is no need for any one nowadays to say what Burns was, or what he was not. This he has himself told us a hundred times in immortal language ; and the following most pathetic and sublime stanza ought to silence both his friends and his enemies—if enemies there can indeed be to a man so nobly endowed. For while with proud consciousness he there glories in the virtues which God had bestowed on him, there does he with compunctious visitings of nature own, in prostration of spirit, that the light which led him astray was not always light from Heaven :—

The poor inhabitant below  
Was quick to learn and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow  
And softer flame ;  
But thoughtless follies laid him low,  
And stained his name.—*James Hogg.*

"O he was a good-looking fine fellow!—he was that; rather black an' ill coloured; but he couldna help that, ye ken. He was a strong manly looking chap; nane o' your shilpit milk-and-water dandies, but a sterling substantial fallow, who wadna hae feared the deil suppose he had met him. An' then siccan an ee he had! Aince an he got a wee bousy I never saw sic an ee in a head!"—*Saunders Proudfoot, quoted in "Memoir of Burns,"* 1836.

With men of upright feeling we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts in a far nobler mausoleum than that of marble; neither will his works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of man. While the Shakspeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves, this little Valchesa fountain will also arrest our eye; for this also is of nature's own and most cunning workmanship, and bursts from the depths of the earth with a full gushing current into the light of day; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its pure waters and muse among its rocks and pines.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

## Richard Porson.

1759–1808.

His head was remarkably fine; an expansive forehead, over which was smoothly combed (when in dress) his shining brown hair. His nose was Roman, with a keen and penetrating eye, shaded with long lashes. His mouth was full of expression, and altogether his countenance indicated deep thought. His stature was nearly six feet. He was fond of reciting favourite passages from Shakspeare. The fine intonations of a melodious voice, and the varied expression of his features on these occasions, were admirable.—*Gordon, quoted by Chambers.*

I remember to have seen Porson at Cambridge in the hall of our college, and in private parties; and I can never recollect him except as drunk or brutal, and generally both—I mean in an evening; for in the hall he dined at the Dean's table, and I at the vice-master's, and he then and there appeared sober in his demeanour; but I have seen him in a private party of undergraduates take up a poker to them, and heard him use language as blackguard as his action. Of all the disgusting brutes,

sulky, abusive, and intolerable, Porson was the most bestial, as far as the few times I saw him went. He was tolerated in this state among the young men for his talents ; as the Turks think a madman inspired and bear with him. He used to recite or rather vomit pages of all languages, and could hiccup Greek like a Helot ; and certainly Sparta never shocked her children with a grosser exhibition than this man's intoxication.—*Byron.*

While Pitt was in power, the greatest philologist of the age, his own contemporary at Cambridge, was reduced to earn a livelihood by the lowest literary drudgery, and to spend in writing squibs for the *Morning Chronicle* years to which we might have owed an all but perfect text of the whole tragic and comic drama of Athens.—*Macaulay.*

When Porson dined with me I used to keep him within bounds, but I frequently met him at various houses where he got completely drunk. He would not scruple to return to the dining-room, after the company had left it, pour into a tumbler the drops remaining in the wine-glasses, and drink off the omnium gatherum.—*Sam. Rogers.*

Porson would drink ink rather than not drink at all.—*Horne Tooke.*

Mr. Porson . . . is a giant in literature, a prodigy in intellect, a critic whose mighty achievements leave imitation panting at a distance behind them, and whose stupendous powers strike down all the restless and aspiring suggestions of rivalry into silent admiration and passive awe.—*Parr.*

I was once or twice in company with Porson at College. His gift was a surprising memory ; he appeared to me a mere linguist, without any original powers of mind. He was vain, petulant, arrogant, overbearing, rough, and vulgar. He was a great Greek scholar ; but this was a department which very few much cultivated, and in which therefore he had few competitors. What are the extraordinary productions he has left to posterity ? Where is the proof that he has left of energetic sentiments, of deep sagacity, of powerful reasoning, or of high eloquence ? Admit that he has shown acuteness in verbal criticism and verbal emendation ; what is that ? He was one of those men whose eccentricities excited a false notice. The fame of his erudition blinded and dazzled the public.—*Sir Egerton Brydges.*

I was at first greatly struck with the acuteness of his understanding and his multifarious acquaintance with every branch

of polite literature and classical attainments. I also found him extremely modest and humble, and not vain-glorious of his astonishing erudition and capacity. I was not less struck with his memory. Taking tea one afternoon in his company at Dockerell's coffee-house, I read a pamphlet written by Ritson against Tom Warton. I was pleased with the work, and after I had read it I gave it to Porson, who began it, and I left him perusing it. On the ensuing day he drank tea with me, with several other friends, and the conversation happened to turn on Ritson's pamphlet. I alluded to one particular part about Shakspeare, which had greatly interested me, adding, to those who had not read it, I wish I could convey to you a specific idea of the remainder. Porson repeated a page and a half, word for word. I expressed my surprise and said, "I suppose you studied the whole evening at the coffee-house and got it by heart?" "Not at all; I do assure you that I only read it once."—*Life of Archdeacon Coxe.*"

## William Beckford.

1760-1844.

"Vathek" was one of the tales I had a very early admiration of. For correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European imitations, and bears such marks of originality that those who have visited the East will find some difficulty in believing it to be more than a translation.—*Byron.*<sup>1</sup>

(Rogers) told me that Beckford (*the* Beckford) is delighted with "Lalla Rookh;" heard so from Beckford himself in the spring, when I met him at Rogers's in town, and he was all

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<sup>1</sup> Byron also alludes to Beckford in the first canto of "Childe Harold:"

"On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,  
Are domes where whilome Kings did make repair,  
But now the wild flowers round them only breathe;  
Yet ruin'd splendour still is lingering there.  
And yonder towers the Prince's palace fair;  
There thou, too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,  
Once form'd thy Paradise, as not aware  
When wanton wealth her mightiest deeds has done,  
Mæck Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun."

raptures about it. Beckford wishes me to go to Fonthill with R., anxious that I should look over his "Travels" (which were printed some years ago, but afterwards suppressed by him), and prepare them for the press. Rogers supposes he would give me something magnificent for it—a thousand pounds, perhaps; but if he were to give me a hundred times that sum I would not have my name coupled with his. To be Beckford's *sub* not very desirable.—*T. Moore.*

He is a poet, and a great one too, though we know not that he ever wrote a line of verse.—*Quarterly Review.*

William Beckford, the only legitimate son of the "patriot Lord Mayor," had come of age at the end of September to find himself master of a million in ready money and a hundred thousand a year. The haughty spirit and fiery blood of the old Jamaica planters, transmitted through the proud Lord Mayor, who recognised a kindred spirit in Chatham, and dared to beard a king to his face, had been stimulated in the young millionaire by the indulgence of a doting mother, and unchecked by the wholesome discipline of a public school. Young Beckford, educated at home for five years under his mother's eye, had been taught to think himself lord and master of all about him. His quick wit and sensitive organization had been stimulated by wide and desultory reading, and early familiarity with the works of art and *virtu* which crowded Fonthill, even when his father left it. He had completed his education at Geneva, and spent the last three years of his minority in travelling through Switzerland, the Low Countries, Germany, and Italy. Travelling in splendour and luxury, even as a ward in Chancery, and indulging his fancies and fine tastes unchecked and uncontrolled, proud, refined, of febrile energy, full of passion for art, and with no respect for men, he delighted to let his imagination run riot in dreams of more than Eastern wildness. He came back from his travels and found the rank and fashion of London ready to receive the millionaire with open arms. But his sensitive intelligence saw and scorned the deference paid to the money, not to the man: his refined feeling for art was shocked by the shallowness of English connoisseurship and the grossness of English taste; he was too proud for the truckling required of a king's friend, too contemptuous to court popularity in opposition, too proud to follow a leader. . . . It was probably during this short interval between his two visits to the Continent that he had written the wonderful tale

of "Vathek." It was composed in French, and dashed off in a white heat in three days and two nights of continuous labour. Never was a more homogeneous creation. It bears in every line an impress of audacious and weird imagination, which gives it a place as far apart from all the originals of Eastern romance as from the imitations of them. The wonder is the greater if we remember the time when it was written, the mingled decorousness and flatulence, pomposity and poverty of invention in its many Eastern tales and apologues. Compare "Vathek" with the best of these, "Rasselas." It is like comparing a glacier with a lava-stream as it comes out of the burning mountain.—*C. R. Leslie.*

William Beckford, Esq., son of the once celebrated alderman, and heir to his enormous wealth, published at the early age of eighteen, "Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters;" and in the year after the romance ("Vathek"). After sitting for Hindon in several parliaments, this gifted person was induced to fix for a time his residence in Portugal, where the memory of his magnificence was fresh at the time of Lord Byron's pilgrimage. Returning to England, he realized all the outward shows of Gothic grandeur in his unsubstantial pageant of Fonthill Abbey; and has more recently been indulging his fancy with another, probably not more lasting, monument of architectural caprice, in the vicinity of Bath. It is much to be regretted that after a lapse of fifty years, Mr. Beckford's literary reputation should continue to rest entirely on his juvenile, however remarkable performances.—*Note to "Childe Harold."*

### William Lisle Bowles.<sup>1</sup>

1762–1850.

Interrupted by Bowles, who never comes amiss; the mixture of talent and simplicity in him delightful. His parsonage house at Brenhill is beautifully situated; but he has a good deal frittered its beauty away with grottoes, hermitages, and Shenstonian inscriptions. When company is coming he cries,

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<sup>1</sup> Bowles is only now remembered by the stanzas of his admirers, the satire of Byron, and his depreciation of Pope. Of the controversy on Pope, famous in its day, and by no means forgotten in ours, the following character, showing how it commenced and how it was continued, was printed in a provincial journal of repute:—

"Here, John, run with the crucifix and missal to the hermitage, and set the fountain going." His sheep-bells are tuned in thirds and fifths; but he is an excellent fellow notwithstanding; and if the waters of his inspiration be not those of Helicon, they are at least very *sweet* waters, and to my taste pleasanter than some that are more strongly impregnated.—*Thomas Moore's "Diary."*

Bowles, like most other poets, was greatly depressed by the harsh criticisms of the reviewers. I advised him not to mind them; and eventually following my advice, he became a much happier man. I suggested to him the subject of the "Missionary," and he was to dedicate it to me. He, however, dedicated it to a noble lord, who never either by word or letter, acknowledged the dedication. Bowles's nervous timidity is the most ridiculous thing imaginable. Being passionately fond of music, he came to London expressly to attend the last commemoration of Handel. After going into the Abbey, he observed that the door was closed: immediately he ran to the door-keeper, exclaiming, "What! am I to be *shut up* here?" and out he went before he had heard a single note. I once bought a stall-ticket for him that he might accompany me to the opera; but just as we were stepping into the carriage, he said, "Dear me, your horses seem uncommonly frisky!" and he stayed at home.—*Sam. Rogers.*

My heart has thanked thee, Bowles! for those soft strains  
Whose sadness soothes me, like the murmuring  
Of wild bees in the sunny shower of Spring!  
For hence, not callous to the mourner's pains,

Mr. Bowles wrote a book upon Pope.

Mr. Campbell abused Mr. Bowles's book upon Pope.

Mr. Bowles wrote an answer to Mr. Campbell's abuse of Mr. Bowles's book on Pope.

Lord Byron wrote a letter to certain stars in Albemarle-street, in answer to Mr. Bowles's answer to Mr. Campbell's abuse of Mr. Bowles's book on Pope.

Jeremy Bentham, Esq., wrote a letter to Lord Byron about Lord Byron's letter to certain stars in Albemarle-street, in answer to Mr. Bowles's answer to Mr. Campbell's abuse of Mr. Bowles's book on Pope.

Mr. Bowles wrote an answer, not to Jeremy Bentham, but to Lord Byron's letter to certain stars in Albemarle-street, in answer to Mr. Bowles's answer to Mr. Campbell's abuse of Mr. Bowles's book on Pope.

Here the controversy ended, leaving each disputant more thoroughly satisfied with his own judgment.—*Ed.*



Through youth's gay prime and thornless paths I went;  
 And when the darker day of life began,  
 And I did roam a thought-bewilder'd man,  
 Their mild and manliest melancholy lent  
 A mingled charm, which oft the pang consigned  
 To slumber, though the big tear it renewed;  
 Bidding such strange mysterious pleasure brood  
 Over the wavy and tumultuous mind,  
 As made the soul enamoured of her woe:  
 No common praise to thee, dear bard, I owe.—*Coleridge.*

Hail Sympathy! the soft idea brings  
 A thousand visions of a thousand things,  
 And shows still whimpering through threescore of years  
 The maudlin prince of mournful sonneteers.  
 And art thou not their prince, harmonious Bowles?  
 Thou first great oracle of tender souls!  
 Whether thou sing'st with equal ease and grief  
 The fall of empires, or a yellow leaf;  
 Whether thy muse most lamentably tells  
 What merry sounds proceed from Oxford bells;  
 Or still in bells delighting, finds a friend  
 In every chime that jingles from Ostend;  
 Ah! how much juster were thy muse's hap,  
 If to thy bells thou wouldst but add a cap!—*Byron.*

## Joanna Baillie.

1762–1851.

In that entire and wonderful revolution of the public taste in works of imagination, and indeed of literature generally, which contrasts this century with the whole or latter half of the preceding, and which—while referring to Cowper and not forgetting “Lewesdon Hall,” or Mr. Bowles's first two or three publications—we must nevertheless principally and in the fore-

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<sup>1</sup> “Lewesdon Hall,” highly esteemed in its day, was the composition of one Crowe, of whom Dr. Parr, in reply to the question how he liked him, said, “Madam, I love him; he is the very brandy of genius mixed with the stinking water of absurdity.” Sam. Rogers also entertained a high opinion of him. See “Table Talk.”—ED.

most rank, ascribe to the example, the arguments, and the influence of Wordsworth and Coleridge—in this great movement Joanna Baillie bore a subordinate but most useful and effective part. Unversed in the ancient languages and literature, by no means accomplished in those of her own age, or even her own country, this remarkable woman owed it partly to the simplicity of a Scotch education, partly to the influence of the better part of Burns's poetry, but chiefly to the spontaneous action of her own forceful genius, that she was able at once, and apparently without effort, to come forth, the mistress of a masculine style of thought and diction, which constituted then, as it constitutes now, the characteristic merit of her writings, and which, at the time, contributed most beneficially to the already commenced reformation of the literary principles of the century.—*Quarterly Review*.

However different and inferior in degree, her mind resembles Shakspeare's in kind. She plans her characters deliberately : she executes them with undeviating consistency ; her pictures of passion are all leavened and penetrated by general and elevated reflection. . . . Comprehension and grasp of mind are qualities which we involuntarily associate with all her works ; and it is indeed singular that this quality, so seldom found in connexion with even the best works of the best female writers, should be thus conspicuous in the works of a woman, when its presence is so rare in those of her male competitors.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1836.

The seriousness, simplicity, and thoughtfulness of Joanna's manners overawe you from talking commonplace to her ; and as for pretension or talking fine, you would as soon think of giving yourself airs before an apostle. She is mild and placid, but makes no effort either to please or to shine ; she will neither dazzle or be dazzled, yet, like others of the higher class of mind, is very indulgent in her opinions : what passes before her seems rather food for thought than mere amusement. In short, she is not merely a woman of talent, but of genius, which is a very different thing, and very unlike any other thing ; which is the reason I have taken so much pains to describe her.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

Her tragedies have a boldness and grasp of mind, a firmness of hand, and resonance of cadence that scarcely seem within the reach of a female writer ; whilst the tenderness and sweetness of her heroines—the grace of the love-scenes, and the trembling

outgushings of sensibility, as in "Orra," for instance, in the fine tragedy of "Fear," would seem exclusively feminine if we did not know that a true dramatist—as Shakspeare or Fletcher—has the wonderful power of throwing himself, mind and body, into the character that he portrays. That Mrs. Joanna is a *true* dramatist, as well as a great poet, I, for one, can never doubt.—*M. R. Mitford.*

I well remember when her plays upon the Passions first came out, with a metaphysical preface. All the world wondered and stared at me, who pronounced them the work of a woman, although the remark was made every day and everywhere that it was a masculine performance. No sooner, however, did an unknown girl own the work than the value so fell, her book-sellers complained that they could not get paid for what they did, nor did their merits ever again swell the throat of public applause.—*Mrs. Piozzi.*

The powerful dramatic writer, the graceful and witty lyrist, and the sweet and gentle woman. . . . Had the lambent flame of genius not burned in the breast of Joanna Baillie, that of a pure piety, and a spirit made to estimate the blessings of life and to enjoy all the other blessings of peace and social good which it brings, would have still burned brightly in her bosom, and made her just as happy, though not as great—*W. Howitt.*

Ballantyne adds:—"One day, about the same time, when his fame was supposed to have reached its acme, I said to him, 'Will you excuse me, Mr. Scott, but I should like to ask you what you think of your own genius as a poet in comparison with Burns?' He replied, 'There is no comparison whatever, we ought not to be named in the same day.' 'Indeed!' I answered. 'Would you compare Campbell to Burns?' 'No, James, not at all. If you wish to speak of a real poet, Joanna Baillie is now the highest genius of our country.'"—*Lockhart's "Life of Scott."*

Woman (saving Joanna Baillie) cannot write tragedy.—*Byron.*

Do you remember my speaking to you in high terms of a series of plays upon the passions of the human mind, which had been sent to me last winter by the author? I talked to everybody else in the same terms of them at the time, anxiously inquiring for the author, but nobody knew them, nobody cared for them, nobody would listen to me; and at last I unwillingly held my

tongue. . . . This winter the first question upon everybody's lips is, "Have you read the new plays?" Everybody talks in the raptures (I always thought they deserved) of the tragedies and of the introduction, as of a new and admirable piece of criticism. Sir G. Beaumont, who was with me yesterday, said he never expected to see such tragedies in his days; and C. Fox, to whom he had sent them, is in such raptures with them, that he has written a critique of five pages upon the subject to Sir George.—*Miss Berry's "Correspondence."*

## William Cobbett.

1762-1835.

It would be well worth the while of some competent editor to form a selection from Cobbett's multifarious writings. Since Swift, from whom he derived his style, there has been no more remarkable writer of terse, idiomatic English, and especially of the language of vituperation. When he was seeking work at Kew Gardens, at ten years old, he slept under a haystack, reading the "Tale of a Tub" as long as daylight lasted. His mind was not reserved or thoughtful enough to appropriate the irony of his great master; but in the "Political Register" there are lampoons as bitter, and almost as forcible and witty, as those of Swift himself. In his miscellaneous writings, such as his "English Grammar," Cobbett always digresses from time to time into gratuitous attacks on the multitudinous objects of his indignation. "You may use," he tells his pupil, "either a singular or plural verb with a noun of multitude, but you must not use both numbers in the same sentence. It is wrong to say, Parliament *is* shamefully extravagant, and *they are* returned by a gang of rascally borough-mongers."—*G. S. Venables.*

A labourer's son, 'mid squires and lords,  
Strong on his own stout legs he stood;  
Well-armed in bold and trenchant wit;  
And well they learned that tempted it,  
That his was English blood.

And every wound his victim felt  
Had in his eyes a separate charm;  
Yet, better than successful strife,  
He loved the memory of his life  
In boyhood, on the farm.—*George Lushington.*

He is a kind of fourth estate in the politics of the country. He is not only unquestionably the most powerful political writer of the day, but one of the best writers in the language. He thinks and speaks plain, broad, downright English. He might be said to have the clearness of Swift, the naturalness of Defoe, and the picturesque satirical description of Mandeville.  
—*Hazlitt*.

There was something of *Dandie Dinmont* about him, with his unfailing good humour and good spirits, his heartiness, his love of field sports, and his liking for a foray. He was a tall, stout man, fair and sunburnt, with a bright smile, and an air compounded of the soldier and the farmer, to which his habit of wearing an eternal red waistcoat contributed not a little. He was, I think, the most athletic and vigorous person that I have ever known. Nothing could tire him. At home, in the morning, he would begin his active day by mowing his own lawn, beating his gardener, Robinson, the best mower, excepting himself, in the parish, at that fatiguing work.—*M. R. Mitford*.

Hell is a city much like London—

A populous and a smoky city :

There are all sorts of people undone

And there is little or no fun done,

Small justice shown, and still less pity.

There is a Castles and a Canning,

A Cobbett. . . .—*Shelley*.

In digging up your bones, Tom Paine,

Will Cobbett has done well ;

You visit him on earth again,

He'll visit you in hell !—*Byron*.

It is horrible to know that we are living in the same place with even one human creature so capable, avowedly and exultingly capable, of every brutality that could degrade the name of man.—*Quarterly Review*, 1831.

Mr. Cobbett was brought to trial. He defended himself ; and appearing there for the first time before a public audience, exhibited a new, but by no means a rare example of the difference between writing and speaking. For nothing could be more dull and unimpressive than his speech, nothing less clear and distinct than his reasoning, more feeble than his style, or more embarrassed and inefficient than his delivery.—*Lord Brougham*.

The Cobbett is assuredly a strong and battering production throughout, and in the best bad style of this political rhinoceros, with his coat armour of dry and wet mud, and his one horn of brutal strength on the nose of scorn and hate, not to forget the flying rasp of his tongue. . . . The self-complacency with which he assumes to himself exclusively truths which he can call his own only as a horse-dealer can appropriate a stolen horse, by adding mutilation and deformities to robbery, is as artful as it is amusing. Still, however, he has given great additional publicity to weighty truths, as, *ex. gr.*, the hollowness of *commercial* wealth; and from whatever dirty corner or straw moppet the ventriloquist Truth causes her words to proceed, I not only listen, but must bear witness that it is Truth talking. His conclusions, however, are palpably absurd.—*Coleridge*.

## George Colman the Younger.

1762–1836.

If I had to choose and could not have both at a time, I should say, let me begin the evening with Sheridan and finish it with Colman. Sheridan for dinner and Colman for supper; Sheridan for claret or port, but Colman for everything. Sheridan was a grenadier company of life-guards, but Colman a whole regiment—of *light infantry* to be sure, but still a regiment.—*Byron*.<sup>1</sup>

It was on this occasion that we first had the delight of hearing Mr. Colman read. The comedy of “John Bull” was on the point of being got up at York, and Tate requested as a favour that the author would give the performers the advantage of his instructions in their several characters by reading the

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Charles Mathews, who was personally acquainted with Colman and Sheridan, in her Memoirs of her husband, writes thus of them:—“Colman perfectly broke him (Sheridan) down by the force of his vivacity. Sheridan had no chance with him in repartee, and he always gave up to his little merry companion after the first attempt, in which he generally failed. His genius seemed to forsake him for the time, and Mr. Colman’s fire appeared to blaze the brighter for being kindled upon the embers of the splendid ruin before him. He always felt his own advantage, and was more brilliant as he found the other more dull.”—*ED.*

play in the green-room. This indeed proved a treat; those who were to act in the comedy and those who were not, alike enjoyed it. It is for those only who have experienced the delight of hearing Mr. Colman read his dramatic productions to guess the pleasure with which his perfect representation of every character was listened to by the performers; proving that one of the best dramatists of his day might also have been one of the finest actors.—“*Memoirs of C. Mathews.*”

He was not so interesting a man as his father, for he had not a particle of gravity; and there can be no depth of sympathy where there is no serious feeling. The blank-verse parts of his play are ridiculous prose commonplace, and the sentimental parts of his comedies mere cant and affectation—the whining of hypocrisy and disbelief; but his “fun” was genuine; and if he carried it with him where it had no business, and made his prose-writing and life-writing nothing but overweening joke, pun, and vulgarity, we must admit that he was really the “funny fellow” he wished to be on all lawful occasions. His manners in private, though his conversation was nothing but pun and jest (which, however, does not render the report incredible), are said to have been very polished, and of the old school—an idea which it is difficult to entertain of the author of “Random Records.”—*Edinburgh Review*, 1841.

## COLMAN'S EPITAPH.

Within this monumental bed  
 Apollo's favourite rests his head:  
     Ye Muses, cease your grieving.  
 A son the father's loss supplies,  
 Be comforted, though Colman dies,  
     His “Heir-at-Law” is living.—*Anon.*, 1836.

Colman wrote for all time. He was a sounder, a far cleaner philosopher than Swift—a truer, because a more modest voluptuary than Prior. He did not, like Sterne, bid the “lights of science” phosphorize corruption; he was much more elegant than Smollett or Fielding; nay, the naughtiest passage he ever penned is fitter for feminine perusal than Richardson's “Pamela” and “Clarissa.” Colman sought not, like Byron, to make error resistless—to sneer down virtue and religion;—above all, he was ever *gallant*. He wrote of *woman* (though justly, as to the ibilities of her heart and mind) “like a thankful and reverend

youth." . . . The bard of "Broad Grins" was a moral man.<sup>1</sup>—*W. Ellis.*

## Samuel Rogers.

1763-1855.

His elegance is really wonderful ; there is no such thing as a vulgar line in his book.—*Byron.*

Rogers is silent,—and it is said, severe. When he does talk he talks well ; and, on all subjects of taste, his delicacy of expression is as pure as his poetry. If you enter his house—his drawing-room—his library, you of yourself say, this is not the dwelling of a common mind. There is not a gem, a coin, a book, thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor.—*Ibid.*<sup>2</sup>

He is a very extraordinary man. I firmly believe he dislikes men when they become prosperous, because he feels he can no longer do them and his own heart good by any aid he can tender them.—*Thomas Campbell.*

My dear Rogers, if we were both in America, we should be

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<sup>1</sup> This ridiculous flourish appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine*, for 1837, under the directorship of Theodore Hook.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Medwin, in his "Life of Shelley," prints the following verses on Rogers, which he attributes, whether justly or not I know not, to Byron. I can find room only for the Question, the Answer occupies two pages :—

"Nose and chin would shame a knocker,  
Wrinkles that would puzzle Cocker,  
Mouth which marks the envious scorner,  
With a scorpion at the corner,  
Turning its quick tail to sting you,  
In the place that most may wring you ;  
Eyes of lead-like hue and gummy,  
Carcase picked up from some mummy,  
Bowels—but they were forgotten,  
Save the liver, and that's rotten ;  
Skin all sallow, flesh all sodden,  
From the Devil would frighten Godwin.  
Is't a corpse set up for show ?  
Galvaniz'd at times to go ?  
With the Scripture in connexion,  
New proof of the resurrection ?  
Vampire ! ghost ! or goat, what is it ?  
I would walk ten miles to miss it."—ED.



tarred and feathered ; and lovely as we are by nature, I should be an ostrich and you an emu.—*S. Smith.*

Mr. Rogers, I believe, has never met with that species of Mohawk criticism, that scalping and scarifying literary assault and battery, which so many of his contemporaries have had to undergo. There was a gentleness and a calm suavity about his writings which disarmed the most eager assailant of merit. There was in him an absence of that militant and antagonistic spirit which provokes the like animus. There were felt only the purity of taste, the deep love of beauty in art and nature, the vivid yet tender sympathy with humanity which put every one dreadfully in the wrong who should attempt to strike down their possessor.—*W. Howitt.*

Dare I in lame and simple pride  
Hobble where Rogers loves to glide ?  
Whose sweetly simple measures  
Make enviers of Genius mad,  
Delight the moral, soothe the sad,  
Give *Human Life* a zest, and add  
To *Memory's* greatest *Pleasures*.—*Colman.*

How vexatious it is that a man who has so much the power of pleasing and attaching people to him should mar the gifts of Nature so entirely by giving way to that sickly and discontented turn of mind, which makes him dissatisfied with everything, and disappointed in all his views of life ! Yet he can feel for others ; and notwithstanding this unfortunate habit he has given himself of dwelling upon the faults and follies of his friends, he really can feel attachment.—*Lady Donegal to T. Moore.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lady Donegal and Rogers waged incessant conflicts. Once at dinner she called across to Rogers, "Now I am sure you are talking against me." "Lady Donegal," answered Rogers, "I pass my life in defending you." Rogers seems indeed to have justified the character given to him in the verses with which Capt. Medwin accredits Byron. On entering Moore's cottage at Sloperton, and seeing it hung round with portraits of Lords Grey, Russell, Lansdowne, &c., he remarked, "So I see you have your *patrons* around you." When Moore afterwards told the story, he said, "A good-natured man would have said *friends*." Assuredly he was not good-natured. He once liberally belauded a friend, Lady ——. On his leaving the room a lady remarked that she had never heard Rogers speak so well of any one before. The door opened, and in popped Rogers's head. "There are spots on the sun, though," cried he, and disappeared. His opinion of a friend's wife was thus expressed : "The banditti wanted to carry off P——"

I believe no man ever was so much attended to and thought of, who had so slender a fortune and such calm abilities. His god was Harmony ; and over his life Harmony presided, sitting on a lukewarm cloud. He was *not* the poet, sage, and philosopher people expect to find he was ; but a man in whom the tastes (rare fact) preponderated over the passions, who defrayed the expenses of his tastes as other men make outlay for the gratification of their passions. He did nothing rash. I am sure Rogers as a baby never fell down unless he was pushed ; but walked from chair to chair in the drawing-room, steadily and quietly, till he reached the place where the sunbeam fell on the carpet. He must always have preferred a lullaby to the merriest game at romps.—*Quoted in the Edinburgh Review*, 1856.

We see Rogers often in the morning, but he does not dine here. . . . I sometimes like him very much, and sometimes I think him so given up, body and soul, to the world, and such a worshipper of my lord and my lady, that I think it a great waste of any of my spare kind feelings to bestow them upon him. Love without a coronet over it goes for nothing in his eyes.—*Moore's "Diary."*

## Anne Radcliffe.

1764-1823.

Mrs. Radcliffe was as truly an inventor, a great and original writer in the department she had struck out for herself—whether that department was of the highest kind or no—as the Richardsons, Fieldings, Smolletts, whom she succeeded, and for a time threw into the shade, or the Ariosto of the North, before whom her own star has paled its ineffectual fires. The passion of fear—the latent sense of supernatural awe, and curiosity concerning whatever is hidden and mysterious—these were themes and sources of interest which, prior to the appearance of her tales, could scarcely be said to be touched on.—*Lord Jeffrey*, 1834.

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into the mountains, when they were stopped in Italy ; but his wife flung her arms round her husband's neck, and rather than take *her* with them they let him go."—*Ed.*

I loved her from my boyhood : she to me  
 Was as a fairy city of the heart,  
 Rising like water columns from the sea,  
 Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart.  
 And Otway, RADCLIFFE, Schiller, Shakspeare's art  
 Had stamp'd her image on me.—“*Childe Harold*.”

## Robert Hall.

1764–1831.

Whoever wishes to see the English language in its perfection must read the writings of that great divine, Robert Hall. He combines the beauties of Johnson, Addison, and Burke, without their imperfections.—*Dugald Stewart*.

For moral grandeur, for Christian truth, and for sublimity, we may doubt whether they have their match in the sacred oratory of any age or country.—*Sedgwick*.

The name of Robert Hall will be placed by posterity among the best writers of the age, as well as the most vigorous defenders of religious truth, and the brightest examples of Christian charity.—*Sir F. Mackintosh*.

Nothing is more talked of than Robert Hall's “Sermons.” Our bishop makes every family of every description, possessed of money, buy that and “The Strictures,” and speaks of both as grand engines to reform the times.—“*Memoirs of H. More*.”

We had amongst us some English Dissenters. Robert Hall, now a Dissenting clergyman at Cambridge, was of the number. He then displayed the same acuteness and brilliancy, the same extraordinary vigour both of understanding and imagination, which have since distinguished him. His society and conversation had a great influence on my mind. Our controversies were almost unceasing. We lived in the same house, and we were both very disputatious. He led me to the perusal of Jonathan Edwards's book on Free Will, which Dr. Priestley had pointed out before. I am sorry that I never yet read the other works of that most extraordinary man, who in a metaphysical age or country would certainly have been deemed as much the boast of America as his great countryman Franklin. Hall defended the rigid, and I the more lenient opinion.—“*Life of Sir James Mackintosh*.”

He is what Johnson would have been (if it be possible to

conceive him such) had he been a Whig and a Dissenter. He has something of his dogmatism—something of his superstition—something of his melancholy—something of the same proneness to erect himself before man and prostrate himself to the earth before God ; a mixture of pride and of humility—of domination and self-abasement. He has much, too, of Johnson's love of common sense and home-spun philosophy, combined, however, with an imagination far more vivid and excursive, for which the former qualities did not serve as an adequate corrective. His learning is not on the same scale as his mother wit ; it is enough, however, to add stamina to his speculations, and for more perhaps he did not greatly care. His knowledge of metaphysical and deistical writers appears to have been that in which he chiefly excelled ; his allusions to classical authors are few, and his quotations from them trite and unscholar-like ; but he was too affluent to borrow, and too independent to be a slave to authorities.—*Quarterly Review*, 1832.

### Sir James Mackintosh.

1765-1832.

Mackintosh's memory is well stored with fine passages, Latin and English, which he repeats ; and his taste in poetry inclines rather to metrical philosophy than pathos or fancy. Milton, Dryden, and Pope, have alone sufficient good sense to please him ; Virgil he overrates, I think, and Cicero too. Style and again style is the topic of his praise.—*W. Taylor*.

A high merit in Sir James Mackintosh was his real and unaffected philanthropy. He did not make the improvement of the great mass of mankind an engine of popularity and a stepping-stone to power, but he had a genuine love of human happiness. Whatever might assuage the angry passions, and arrange the conflicting interests of nations ; whatever could promote peace, increase knowledge, extend commerce, diminish crime, and encourage industry ; whatever could exalt human character, and could enlarge human understanding, struck at once at the heart of your father, and roused all his faculties. I have seen him in a moment when this spirit came upon him—like a great ship of war—cut his cable, and spread his enormous canvas, and launch into a wide sea of reasoning eloquence.—*Sydney Smith*.

His mind was a vast magazine, admirably arranged. Every-

thing was there ; and everything was in its place. His judgments on men, on sects, or books, had been often and carefully tested and weighed, and had then been committed, each to its proper receptacle, in the most capacious and accurately constructed memory that any human being ever possessed.—*Macaulay.*

Coleridge has seen much of him at the Wedgewoods. He describes him as acute in argument, more skilful in detecting the logical errors of his adversary than in propounding truth himself—a man accustomed to the gladiatorship of conversation—a literary fencer who parries better than he thrusts.—*Southey.*

His universality of knowledge must be admitted. He was one of the most amiable of men, and the most delightful of all society, and not conceited and dogmatical like Coleridge. As Campbell truly observed also, he was too great a man for the House of Commons, where candid, sound argument, closely reasoned, is as much out of place as a ship on dry land.—*C. Redding.*

I think Mackintosh a better philosopher, and a better citizen than Payne; in whose book there are great irradiations of genius, but none of the glowing and generous warmth which virtue inspires; that warmth which is often kindled in the bosom of Mackintosh.—*Dr. Parr.*<sup>1</sup>

I never met a man with a fuller mind than Mackintosh—such readiness on all subjects, such a talker !—*Rogers.*

To Mackintosh indeed my obligations have been of a far higher order than those even of the kindest hospitality; he has been an intellectual master to me, and has enlarged my prospects into the wide region of moral speculation, more than any other tutor I ever had in the art of thinking; I cannot even except Dugald Stewart, to whom I once thought I owed more than I could ever receive from another. Had Mackintosh remained in England, I should have possessed, ten years hence, powers and views which now are beyond my reach.—*F. Horner.*

Mackintosh strives to unite

The grave and the gay, the profound and polite ;  
And piques himself much that the ladies should say—  
How well Scottish strength softens down in Bombay !

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<sup>1</sup> Yet Parr disliked Mackintosh. "Mackintosh," said he, "came up from Scotland with a metaphysical head, a cold heart, and open hands."—*ED.*

Frequents the assembly, the supper, the ball,  
The *philosophe-beau* of unloveable Staël ;  
Affects to talk French in his hoarse Highland note,  
And gurgles Italian halfway down his throat ;  
His gait is a shuffle, his smile is a leer,  
His converse is quaint, his civility queer,—  
In short—to all grace and deportment a rebel,  
At best he is but a half-polish'd Scotch pebble.

“ *New Whig Guide.* ”

Of all those whose conversation is referred to by Moore, Sir James Mackintosh was the ablest, the most brilliant, and the best informed. A most competent judge in this matter has said, “Till subdued by age and illness, his conversation was more brilliant and instructive than that of any human being's I ever had the good fortune to be acquainted with.” His stores of learning were vast, and of those kinds which, both in serious and light conversation, are most available.—*Earl Russell.*

Sir James Mackintosh is the king of the men of *talent*. He is a most elegant converser. How well I remember his giving breakfast to me and Sir Humphrey Davy, at that time an unknown young man, and our having a very spirited talk about Newton, Locke, and so forth ! When Davy was gone, Mackintosh said to me, “That's a very extraordinary young man ; but he is gone wrong on some points.” But Davy was at that time at least a man of genius ; and I doubt if Mackintosh ever heartily appreciated an eminently original man. He is uncommonly powerful in his own line ; but it is not the line of a first-rate man. After all his fluency and brilliant erudition, you can rarely carry off anything worth preserving. You might not improperly write on his forehead, “warehouse to let.” He always dealt too much in generalities for a lawyer. He is deficient in power in applying his principles to the points in debate.—*Coleridge*, “*Table Talk.*”

## Maria Edgeworth.

1767–1849.

She was a nice little unassuming “Jeanie-Deans-looking body,” as we Scotch say,—and if not handsome, certainly not

ill-looking.<sup>1</sup> Her conversation was as quiet as herself. One would never have guessed she could write her *name*.—*Byron*.

Her merit, her extraordinary merit, both as a moralist and a woman of genius, consists in her having selected a class of virtues far more difficult to treat as the subject of fiction than others, and which had therefore been left by former writers to her.—*Sir James Mackintosh*.

Miss Edgeworth was delightful—so clever and sensible! She does not say witty things, but there is such a perfume of wit runs through her conversation as makes it very brilliant.—*Sydney Smith*.

The art of Miss Edgeworth's stories is, I think, too apparent. The follies and vices of the actors bring them too regularly to ruin. They act in circumstances arranged for them, and do not, as in Shakspeare, produce the circumstances in the development of their characters.—*B. R. Haydon*.

There are very few who have had the opportunities that have been presented to me, of knowing how very elevated is the admiration entertained by the author of "Waverley" for the genius of Miss Edgeworth. From the intercourse that took place between us while the work was going through my press, I *know* that the exquisite truth and power of your characters operated on his mind at once to excite and subdue it. . . . "If I could but hit Miss Edgeworth's wonderful power of vivifying all her persons, and making them live as beings in your mind I should not be afraid,"—often has the author of "Waverley" used such language to me, and I knew that I could gratify him most when I could say, "Positively this *is* equal to Miss Edgeworth."—*James Ballantyne*.

Miss Edgeworth is at present the great lioness of Edinburgh; and a very nice lioness. She is full of fun and spirit; a little slight figure, very active in her motions, very good humoured and full of enthusiasm. . . . It is scarcely possible to say more of this very remarkable person than that she not only completely

<sup>1</sup> Miss Edgeworth's father was Richard Lovell Edgeworth, a writer of some popularity in his day. Sydney Smith says, "Mr. Edgeworth seems to possess the sentiments of an accomplished gentleman, the information of a scholar, and the vivacity of a first-rate harlequin. He is fuddled with animal spirits, giddy with constitutional joy: in such a state he must have written or burst. A discharge of ink was an evacuation absolutely necessary to avoid fatal and olethoric congestion."

answered, but exceeded the expectations that I had formed. I am particularly pleased with the naïveté and good-humoured ardour of mind which she unites with such formidable powers of acute observation. In external appearance she is quite the fairy of our nursery tale, the Whippity Stourie, if you remember such a sprite, who came flying through the window to work all sorts of marvels. I will never believe but what she has a wand in her pocket, and pulls it out to conjure a little before she begins to write those very striking pictures of manners.—*Sir W. Scott.*

Miss Edgeworth is eminently an utilitarian, and always sets plainly before us the practical bearing of such or such line of conduct, with a view to some useful end. Everything is omitted that is not convertible to this purpose; and the glowing pictures with which other novelists try to embellish their fictitious territory, are by her appropriated to a more homely, but profitable culture. Yet such is the admirable management of her story, the rapid yet natural march of the action, and the spirit and variety of her characters, that we are little disposed, during the progress of the tale, to regret the comparative paucity of adventitious ornaments and complete absence of poetical elevation.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1830.

Speaking of Miss Edgeworth, for whom, genius apart, I have a great respect, my friend Miss Fanshawe<sup>1</sup> met her last year in London. She, who is a strict and highly qualified judge of character, and thinks as highly as I do of her genius, was very much pleased indeed with Miss E.'s manners, which she describes as indicative of perfect modesty and sound good sense. She admired the equal civility with which she received all worthy persons introduced to her, as well as the calm steadiness with which she declined introductions to those who by rank, wit, or assurance, forced their way into that society from which they ought to have been ever excluded by their misconduct.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Fanshawe, a well-known poetess some forty years or more ago. She was the author of the riddle on the letter H, generally attributed to Byron.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> "Wednesday, May 12th.—I went to Lady Davy's in the evening. There were seventy or eighty people there; amongst others Miss Edgeworth, who was my object. She is very small, with a countenance that promises nothing at first sight, or as one sees her in society. She has very winning manners. She received with much warmth what I said of my desire to see



## Junius.

1769-1772.

I like him. He was a good hater.—*Byron.*

That the work entitled, "The Identity of Junius with a Distinguished Living Character Established," proves Sir Philip Francis to be Junius, we will not affirm; but this we can safely assert: that it accumulates such a mass of circumstantial evidence as renders it extremely difficult to believe he is not, and that, if so many coincidences shall be found to have misled us in this case, our faith in all conclusions drawn from proofs of a similar kind may henceforth be shaken.—*Brougham.*

I should have believed Burke to be Junius, because I knew no man but Burke who is capable of writing these "Letters;" but Burke spontaneously denied it to me. The case would have been different, had I asked him if he was the author; a man so questioned, as to anonymous publication, may think he has a right to deny it.—*Johnson.*

One of the strongest reasons for believing that Francis was Junius is the moral resemblance between the two men. . . . He was clearly a man not destitute of real patriotism and magnanimity, a man whose vices were not of a sordid kind. But he must also have been a man in the highest degree arrogant and insolent, a man prone to malevolence, and prone to the error of mistaking his malevolence for public virtue.—*Macaulay.*

The inquiry into the secret of his authorship has been so long and so utterly baffled, that it would now be idle to renew it. The late attempt to give the honour to Sir Philip Francis has failed like the rest, and from a cause admitting of no answer. Sir Philip had not *talents for the task*. Writing all his life, and even emulously adopting the style of Junius, he never was able to adopt his spirit. The habiliments were there, the man to wear them was wanting. The epigrammatic turn, the terse-

the author of her works, and of all the obligations I felt, in common with all our sex, towards one of her genius. She said a great many pretty things of all she had heard of me and of my society.—*Miss Berry's Journal.*—*Ed.*

<sup>1</sup> Of this book Wraxall, in his "Posthumous Memoirs," says, "Every page, combining to a common point, ultimately forces conviction." He satisfactorily disposes of Chalmers's theory of Boyd.—*Ed.*

ness, the virulence, the abruptness, all the errors were there, and all exaggerated ; but the redeeming qualities of the great writer—the vividness, the fine originality—the concealed metaphor shining through and giving beauty to the simplest phrase—the intense poignancy striking like a dagger to the heart, were not there, and Junius has gone to his immortality unencumbered by the clay of Sir Philip Francis.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1833.

All circumstances fully weighed, my own conviction is, that the "Letters of Junius" were written by the Right Honourable William Gerard Hamilton, commonly designated by the nickname of "Single-speech Hamilton."—*Wraxall*.

Three persons are considered as having the best claim to the authorship of "Junius's Letters"—Gibbon, Hamilton, and Burke. Gibbon is out of the question. I do not believe that they were Hamilton's, because a man who was willing to be known as the author of a bad piece would hardly have failed to acknowledge that he had written an excellent book. I incline to think that Burke was Junius.—*Grattan*.

Malone (than whom no one was more intimate with Burke) persisted to the last in saying that if "Junius's Letters" were not written by Burke, they were at least written by some person who had received great assistance from Burke in composing them, and he was strongly inclined to fix the authorship of them upon Dyer.<sup>1</sup>—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

My own impression is that the "Letters of Junius" were written by Sir Philip Francis. In a speech which I once heard him deliver at the Mansion House, concerning the partition of Poland, I had a striking proof that Francis possessed no ordinary powers of eloquence.—*Ibid*.

Nature had conferred on Francis talents such as are rarely dispensed to any individual—a vast range of ideas, a retentive memory, a classic mind, considerable command of language, energy of thought and expression, matured by age, and actuated by an inextinguishable animosity to Hastings. Francis indeed universally disclaimed any personal enmity to the *man*, only

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<sup>1</sup> Dyer was a man of excellent taste and profound erudition, whose principal literary work, under a Roman signature, when the veil with which, for near thirty-one years it has been enveloped, shall be removed, will place him in a high rank among English writers, and transmit a name, now little known, with distinguished lustre to posterity.—*Malone*.

reprobating the measures of the *Ruler of India*, and perhaps he might sincerely believe his assertion. But he always appeared to me, like the son of Livia, to deposit his resentments deep in his own breast; from which he drew them forth, if not augmented by time, at least in all their original vigour and freshness. Acrimony distinguished and characterized him in everything. Even his person, tall, thin, and scantily covered with flesh; his countenance, the lines of which were acute, intelligent, and full of meaning; the tones of his voice, sharp, distinct and sonorous; his very gestures, impatient and irregular—eloquently bespoke the formation of his intellect. I believe I never saw him smile. . . . Bursting with bile, which tinged and pervaded all his speeches in Parliament, yet his irascibility never overcame his reason, nor compelled his friends, like those of Burke, to mingle regret with their admiration, and to condemn or to pity the individual whom they applauded as an orator. Francis, however inferior to Burke in all the flowers of diction, in exuberance of ideas borrowed from antiquity, and in the magic of eloquence, more than once electrified the house by passages of pathos or of interest which arrested every hearer.—*Wraxall's "Posthumous Memoirs."*

The writer of the "Letters of Junius" is still undiscovered. The only claim entitled to discussion is that set up for Sir Philip Francis, in spite of that gentleman himself, by Mr. Taylor, in the very ingenious book, too boldly entitled "Junius Identified." From that book, especially from the interest taken by Junius in the petty intrigues of the War Office, and from the coincidence of the artificial handwriting of Junius with an artificial handwriting of Sir Philip Francis in the possession of Mr. Giles, we may probably infer that Sir P. was in the confidence of Junius, and perhaps his amanuensis. The supposition, however, most prevalent among contemporary politicians and men of letters was, that the "Letters" were written by Mr. Dyer, an original member of Johnson's Club, and an intimate friend of Burke, from whom the writer might have received some of his information, perhaps casually; and from whose conversation the few but striking *Burkisms*, so much at variance with the general tenor of the style, might have overflowed into the mind of Dyer, and almost insensibly dropped from his pen.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1826.

## William Wordsworth.

1770-1850.

The more I see of Mr. Wordsworth the more I admire, and I may also say love him. It is delightful to see a life in such perfect harmony with all that his writings express, "true to the kindred points of heaven and home."—*Mrs. Hemans*.

In honour'd poverty thy voice did weave  
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty.—*Shelley*.

Him who utter'd nothing base.—*Tennyson*.

One of the very few original poets that this age (fertile as it is in rhymers *quales ego et Chuvienus*) has had the glory of producing.—*Thomas Moore*.

Of one such teacher who has been given to our own age you have described the power when you said that in his annunciation of truths he seemed to speak in thunders. I believe that mighty voice has not been poured out in vain; that there are hearts that have received into their inmost depths all its varying tones; and that even now there are many to whom the name of Wordsworth calls up the recollection of their weakness and the consciousness of their strength.—*Coleridge*.

He seems a very intelligent man—for a "horse-couper."—*James Hogg*.

We learn from Horace "Homer sometimes sleeps;"  
We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes;—  
To show with what complacency he creeps  
With his dear "Waggoners" around his lakes.  
He wishes for a "boat" to sail the deeps—  
Of ocean?—no, of air; and then he makes  
Another outcry for a "little boat,"  
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

If he must fain sweep o'er th' ethereal plain,  
And Pegasus runs restive in his "Waggon,"  
Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?  
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?  
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,  
He fear'd his neck to venture such a nag on,  
And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,  
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

"Pedlars," and "Boats," and "Waggons!" O ye shades  
Of Pope and Dryden, has it come to this?  
That trash of such sort not alone evades<sup>1</sup>  
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss  
Floats scum-like uppermost, and these Jack Cades  
Of sense and song above your graves may hiss—  
The "little boatman" and his "Peter Bell"  
Can sneer at him who drew "Achitophel!"<sup>2</sup>—*Byron.*

He wrote many poems that are trivial or puerile or mere trash. Not a doubt of it. There stand the very poems still in his works—anybody can see them—the ungrateful monuments of a great poet. Weakness reared by his own hands and kept in repair to his latest day.—*Horne.*

Wordsworth I am told does not care for music! And it is very likely, for music (to judge from his verses) does not seem to care for him. I was astonished the other day, on looking in his works for the first time after a long interval, to find how deficient he was in all that may be called the musical side of a poet's nature—the genial, the animal-spirited, or bird-like,—the happily accordant. Indeed he does not appear to me now half the man I once took him for. . . . He is in danger of being taken by posterity (who will certainly never read two-thirds of him) for a kind of puritan retainer of the Establishment, melancholy in his recommendations of mirth, and perplexed between prudence, pragmatism, subserviency, and ascendancy, retrospection, and innovation.—*Leigh Hunt.*

Wordsworth's faculty is in describing those far-reaching and intense feelings and glimmerings, and doubts and fears, and hopes of man, as referring to what he might be before he was born, or what he may be hereafter. He is a great being, and will hereafter be ranked as one who has a portion of the spirit of the mighty ones, especially Milton, but as one who did not possess the power of using that spirit otherwise than with

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<sup>1</sup> "My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men. . . . I have wished to keep the reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by doing so I shall interest him. . . . There will also be found in these volumes little of what is called 'poetic diction;' as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it."—*Wordsworth.*

<sup>2</sup> In allusion to Mr. Wordsworth's assertion, "The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten."—*Ed.*

reference to himself, and so as to excite a reflex action only; that is, in my opinion, his great characteristic.—*B. R. Haydon.*

I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius.—*Sir W. Scott.*

He is in this sense the most original poet now living, and the one whose writings could the least be spared; for they have no substitute elsewhere. The vulgar do not read them; the learned, who see all things through books, do not understand them; the great despise, the fashionable may ridicule them; but the author has created himself an interest in the heart of the retired and lonely student of nature, which can never die. Persons of this class will still continue to feel what he has felt; he has expressed what they might in vain wish to express, except with glistening eye and faltering tongue! There is a lofty philosophic tone, a thoughtful humanity, infused into his pastoral vein. Remote from the passions and events of the great world, he has communicated interest and dignity to the primal movements of the heart of man, and ingrafted his own conscious reflections on the casual thoughts of hinds and shepherds.—*Hazlitt.*

No one can dip into "The Excursion" without seeing that Wordsworth was devoid of humour, and that he cared more for the narrow Cumberland vale than he did for the big world.—*Alexander Smith.*

Among the great living poets Wordsworth is the one whose poetry is to us the most inexplicable—with all our reverence for his transcendent genius, we do not fear to say the most open to the most serious charges—on the score of its religion. From the first line of the "Lyrical Ballads" to the last of "The Excursion" it is avowedly one system of thought and feeling, embracing his experiences of human life and his meditations on the moral government of this world. The human heart—the human mind—the human soul—to use his own fine words—is "the haunt and main region of his song." There are few, perhaps none, of our affections—using that term in its largest sense—which have not been either slightly touched upon or fully treated by Wordsworth. In his poetry, therefore, we behold an image of what, to his eye, appears to be human life. Is there or is there not some great and lamentable defect in that image, marring both the truth and beauty of that representation? We think there is, and that it lies in his religion.—*Wilson, "Recreations of Christopher North."*

To feel for the first time a communion with his mind is to discover loftier faculties in our own.—*Talfourd*.

His words have passed  
 Into man's common thought and week-day phrase ;  
 This is the poet and his verse will last.  
 Such was our Shakspeare once, and such doth seem  
 One who redeems our later gloomier days.

*R. C. Trench.*

## Sydney Smith.

1771-1845.

Smug Sydney.—*Lord Byron*.

The very powerful parson, Peter Pith,  
 The loudest wit I e'er was deafened with.—*Ibid*.

When first I went into the church I had a curacy in the middle of Salisbury Plain. The squire of the parish took a fancy to me, and requested me to go with his son to reside at the University of Weimar; before we could get there Germany became the seat of war, and in stress of politics we put into Edinburgh, where I remained five years. The principles of the French Revolution were then fully afloat, and it is impossible to conceive a more violent and agitated state of society. Among the first persons with whom I became acquainted were Lord Jeffrey, Lord Murray (late Lord Advocate for Scotland), and Lord Brougham; all of them maintaining opinions upon political subjects a little too liberal for the dynasty of Dundas, then exercising supreme power over the northern division of the island. One day we happened to meet in the eighth or ninth story or flat in Buccleugh Place, the elevated residence of the then Mr. Jeffrey. I proposed that we should set up a Review; this was acceded to with acclamation. I was appointed editor, and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number of the *Edinburgh Review*. The motto I proposed for the Review was—

*"Tenui musam meditamur avena."*

"We cultivate literature upon a little oatmeal."

But this was too near the truth to be admitted.—*Sydney Smith*.

Such eyes, so noble a brow, with its brown hair thinly scattered ; so symmetrical a profile, so expressive a mouth, so fine and glowing a complexion ; such a combination of manly dignity and beauty, were never before seen nor since, as were combined in the face of that short, slight, active youth, Sydney Smith.—*Grace Wharton.*

Looking at all he did, and the way in which he did it, it must be an inexpressible pleasure to all who knew, valued, and loved him, to observe that there was scarcely one question in which the moral, the intellectual, social, or even physical well-being of his fellow men were concerned, to the advancement of which he has not endeavoured to contribute.—*Lord Monteaigle.*

He is universally admitted to have been a great reasoner and the greatest master of ridicule that has appeared amongst us since Swift.—*Lord Macaulay.*

In his peculiar style he has never been equalled, and perhaps will not be surpassed.—*Earl Russell.*<sup>1</sup>

Rare Sydney ! thrice honoured the stall where he sits,

And be his every honour he deigneth to climb at !

Had England a hierarchy form'd all of wits,

Whom but Sydney would England proclaim as its primate ?

*Thomas Moore.*

I never heard a more eloquent man.—*B. R. Haydon.*

Sydney's acute and almost intuitive perception of character made him at once detect whatever was fictitious or assumed, but though this never escaped his keen observation, he was, I firmly believe, more severe towards himself than he was ever towards any other person. His disgust at hypocrisy made him so anxious to avoid the semblance of any attempt to appear better than he was, that he did not always do himself justice. . . . The goodness of his heart was only revealed by his acts.—*Lord Murray.*

Witty as Smith was, I have seen him at my own house, absolutely overpowered by the superior facetiousness of William Banks.—*Rogers.*

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<sup>1</sup> The great delight of Sydney Smith was to produce a succession of ludicrous images ; these followed each other with a rapidity that scarcely left time to laugh ; he himself laughed louder and with more enjoyment than any one. This electric contact of mirth came and went with the occasion ; it cannot be repeated or reproduced.—*Earl Russell, Preface to "Moore's Memoirs."*



What Channing is to the democracy of America, with his sober, sustained, and clear dialectic, Sydney Smith is to the tribes of Noddledom, with his irony, his jeering, and his felicitous illustrations. It is his pre-eminently to abash those who are case-hardened against grave argument, and to wring the withers of the very numerous and respectable class, who

“Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,  
Are touched and shamed by ridicule alone.”

There are thousands upon thousands whose intelligence is not to be awakened to the perception of wrong by the force of an Elenchus, unless, like a wasp, it carries a sting in its tail, who perceive nothing false that is not at the same time obviously absurd. To all such, Sydney Smith is an apostle; be they as bigoted and as obtuse as they may, he breaks through their barrier of inapprehensiveness, presents them with a vivid and well-defined idea, and leaves them without “a word to throw to a dog.” . . . His wit, like the spear of Ithuriel, has startled many a concealed misleader of the people.—*Literary Gazette*.

His eminence as a writer upon various subjects was great. His kindness and charity were a blessing to the poor by whom he was surrounded; his warmth of heart, the clearness and depth of his understanding, and his brilliant conversation made him the most genial of social companions, the most cherished guest of every society he entered. His abounding wit and playful humour were always founded on good sense and on practical wisdom, and he was often apparently so amused himself with the comic combinations that sprang from their sober foundations, that, as the bright thoughts came bubbling forth in words, he enhanced the amusement of others by his own frank mirth.—*Miss Berry's "Journal."* Note.

## Sir Walter Scott.

1771-1832.

Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue  
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,  
Follow this wondrous potentate.—*Wordsworth*.

Let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball, and after some sayings peculiarly pleasing from royal lips as to my own attempts, he talked

to me of you and your immortalities: he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered I thought the "Lay." He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him I thought you more particularly the poet of *princes*, as they never appeared more fascinating than in "Marmion" and "The Lady of the Lake." He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell upon the description of your Jameses as no less royal than poetical. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his royal highness's opinion of your powers.—*Byron*.<sup>1</sup>

I passed three days with Walter Scott, an amusing and highly estimable man. You see the whole extent of his powers in the Minstrel's "Lay," of which your opinion seems to accord with mine—a very amusing poem; it excites a novel-like interest, but you discover nothing on after-perusal. Scott bears a great part in the *Edinburgh Review*, but does not review well.—*Southey to W. Taylor*.

It seemed to me that when he stood on his sound or left limb he rose to the height of a Hercules, and when on the lame one that he dwindled into a dwarf. Except for this infirmity, his person would have been extremely handsome; he was at that time about thirty-four, rather fair, but without colour in his cheek, light brown hair, combed straight on the forehead, the eyebrows still lighter and hanging much over the eyes, which were greyish, small and sharp, the nose not so prominent as in Chantrey's bust, the upper lip remarkably long and curved outwards, the corners of the eyelids, as well as the corners of the mouth, inclining downwards, his teeth small and regular, but ill-coloured, which appeared to be the result of inattention, the more remarkable as in all other respects he was scrupulously nice in his toilet. His hands were delicate, and at that time he always wore an antique gold ring on the little finger of the left hand. The sound limb, save that the foot was too large, was eminently handsome. The shoe of the lame foot was always too long; he walked very rapidly, took gigantic strides, set the staff so close to the lame foot as often to put it actually on it, and I was in constant apprehension that

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<sup>1</sup> Scott is certainly the most wonderful writer of the day. His novels are a new literature in themselves, and his poetry as good as any—if not better—only on an erroneous system.—*Byron*, 1821.

he would fall and injure himself. In manner he was a perfect gentleman.—*Mrs. Ballantyne.*

The whole expression of his benevolent countenance changes if he has but to speak of the dirk and the claymore; you see the spirit that would “say amidst the trumpets, Ha! ha!” suddenly flashing from his grey eyes, and sometimes, in repeating a verse of warlike minstrelsy, he will spring up, as if he caught the sound of a distant gathering-cry.—*Mrs. Hemans.*

Scott is the other wonder of this age. Picturesque, interesting, and bard-like as are his narrative poems, the pathos, humour, description, character, and above all, the marvellous fertility displayed in the novels, show far greater power; a whole region of the territory of Imagination is occupied by this extraordinary man, alone and unapproachable.—*Earl Russell.*<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Scott always seems to me to be like a glass through which the rays of admiration pass without sensibly affecting it.—*Mrs. Grant.*

The last series of those half novels, half romance things, called “Tales of My Landlord,” are dying off apace; but if their author gets money he will not care about the rest; having never owned his work, no celebrity can be lost, nor no venture can injure him.—*Mrs. Piozzi.*

The second and third volumes of a strange book, entitled “Tales of my Landlord” (“Old Mortality”), are very fine in their way. People say ‘tis like reading Shakspeare! I say ‘tis as like Shakspeare as a bottle of peppermint water is to a bottle of the finest French brandy.—*Ibid.*

Sir Walter Scott, Lamb, Wilkie, and Procter have been with

<sup>1</sup> Of Earl Russell, Lady Blessington wrote: “He came and dined with us, and was in better health and spirits than I remember him when in England. He is exceedingly well-read, and has a quiet dash of humour that renders his observations very amusing. When the reserve peculiar to him is thawed, he can be very agreeable. . . . Good sense, a considerable power of discrimination, a highly cultivated mind, and great equality of temper are the characteristics of Lord John Russell, and these peculiarly fit him for taking a distinguished part in public life. The only obstacle to his success seems to me to be the natural reserve of his manners, which, by leading people to think him cold and proud, may preclude him from exciting that warm sentiment of personal attachment rarely accorded except to those whose uniform friendly demeanour excites and strengthens it.” Another writer says: “He has no pretensions to the rank of an orator: without originality, unaided by force or brilliancy, mediocrity is the best word to describe his intellect.”—*Roebuck's “Whig Ministry of 1830.”*

me all the morning, and a most delightful morning have we had. Scott operated on us like champagne and whisky mixed. In the course of conversation he alluded to "Waverley:" there was a dead silence. Wilkie, who was talking to him, stopped, and looked so agitated, you would have thought that he was the author. I was bursting to have a good round at him, but as this was his first visit I did not venture. It is singular how success and the want of it operate on two extraordinary men, Walter Scott and Wordsworth. Scott enters a room, and sits at table, with the coolness and self-possession of conscious fame; Wordsworth with a mortified elevation of head, as if fearful he was not estimated as he deserved. Scott is always cool and very amusing . . . the companion of nature in all her feelings and freaks.—*B. R. Haydon.*

It appears certain that his works must have produced to the author or his trustees at the very least *half a million of money!* —*W. Howitt.*

On Friday last the poetically great Walter Scott came, like a sunbeam, to my dwelling. This proudest boast of the Caledonian muse is tall, and rather robust than slender, but lame, in the same manner as Mr. Hayley, and in a greater measure. Neither the contour of his face nor yet his features are elegant; his complexion healthy, and somewhat fair, without bloom. We find the singularity of brown hair and eyelashes, with flaxen eyebrows, and a countenance open, ingenuous, and benevolent. When seriously conversing or earnestly attentive, though his eyes are rather of a lightish grey, deep thought is on their lids; he contracts his brow, and the rays of genius gleam aslant from the orbs beneath them. An upper lip too long prevents his mouth from being decidedly handsome, but the sweetest emanations of temper and heart play about it when he talks cheerfully or smiles, and in conversation he is much oftener gay than contemplative.—*Anna Seward.*

In my humble opinion, Walter Scott's *sense* is a still more wonderful thing than his *genius*.—*Lord Cockburn.*

Dear Sir Walter Scott and myself were exact but harmonious opposites in this—that every ruin, hill, river, or tree called up in his mind a host of historical or biographical associations, just as a bright pan of brass when beaten is said to attract the swarming bees; whereas for myself, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson, I believe I should walk over the plain of Marathon without taking more interest in it than in any other plain

of similar features. . . . When I am very ill indeed I can read Scott's novels, and they are almost the only books I can then read.—*Coleridge*.

## James Montgomery.

1771-1854.

It may be said that nature never infused into a human composition a greater portion of kindness and general philanthropy. A heart more sensibly alive to every better, as well as every finer feeling, never beat in a human breast. Perhaps no two individuals in manners, pursuits, character, and composition, ever more exactly corresponded with each other than Montgomery and Cowper. The same benevolence of heart, the same modesty of deportment, the same purity of life, the same attachment to literary pursuits, the same fondness for solitude and retirement from the public haunts of men; and to complete the picture, the same ardent feeling in the cause of religion, and the same disposition to gloom and melancholy. His person, which is rather below the middle stature, is neatly formed; his features have the general expression of simplicity and benevolence, rendered more interesting by a hue of melancholy that pervades them. When animated by conversation, his eye is uncommonly brilliant, and his whole countenance is full of intelligence.—*Anon., quoted by W. Howitt.*

The longer his fame endures and the wider it spreads, the better it will be for virtue and for man.—*W. Howitt.*

Poor Montgomery, though praised by every English Review, has been bitterly reviled by the *Edinburgh*. After all, the bard of Sheffield is a man of considerable genius. His "Wanderer of Switzerland" is worth a thousand "Lyrical Ballads," and at least fifty "degraded epics."—*Byron.*

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<sup>1</sup> With broken lyre and cheek serenely pale,  
 Lo ! sad Alcæus wanders down the vale ;  
 Though fair they rose, and might have bloom'd at last,  
 His hopes have perish'd by the northern blast.  
 Nipp'd in the bud by Caledonian gales,  
 His blossoms wither as the blast prevails !  
 O'er his lost works let classic Sheffield weep :  
 May no rude hand disturb their early sleep.  
*"English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."*

There is something in all his poetry which makes fiction the most impressive teacher of truth and wisdom ; and by which, while the intellect is gratified and the imagination roused, the heart, if it retains any sensibility to tender or elevating emotions, cannot fail to be made better.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1835.

We think of James Montgomery—and what strains of heavenly melody arise !—*John Wilson*.

## James Hogg.

1772–1835.

There was an absence of individuality in him. There was nothing except that singular egotism and somewhat extravagant fancy which could lead you on reading a poem of his to say, that is Hogg and can be no one else. His poems are generally extremely diffuse ; they surprise and charm you on opening them, at the vigour, liveliness, and strength of the style, but they are of that kind that the further you go the more this charm wears off ; you grow weary you hardly know why ; you cannot help protesting to yourself that they are very clever, nay, wonderful ; yet there wants a certain soul, a condensation, a something to set upon them the stamp of that genius which seizes on your love and admiration beyond question or control.—*W. Howitt*.

Oh ! I have had the most amusing letter from Hogg, the Ettrick minstrel and shepherd. He wants me to recommend him to Murray ; and speaking of his present bookseller, whose “bills” are never “lifted,” he adds *totidem verbis*, “God d—him and them both !” I laughed, and so would you too, at the way in which this execration is introduced. The said Hogg is a strange being, but of great though uncouth powers. I think very highly of him as a poet ; but he and half of these Scotch and Lake troubadours are spoilt by living in little circles and petty societies.—*Byron*.

A true son of nature and genius, hardly conscious of his powers. He had taught himself to write by copying the letters of a printed book as he lay watching his flock on the hill-side, and had possibly reached the utmost pitch of his ambition when he first found that his artless rhymes could touch the heart of the ewe-milker who partook the shelter of his mantle

during the passing storm. As yet his naturally kind and simple character had not been exposed to any of the dangerous flatteries of the world; his heart was pure—his enthusiasm buoyant as that of a happy child; and well as Scott knew that reflection, sagacity, wisdom, and wit were scattered abundantly among the humblest rangers of these pastoral solitudes, there was here a depth and brightness that filled him with wonder, combined with a quaintness of humour and a thousand little touches of absurdity which afforded him more entertainment, as I have often heard him say, than the best comedy that ever set the pit in a roar.—*Lockhart's "Life of Scott."*<sup>1</sup>

I have now touched on those incidents in the earlier part of my brother's life, that appear to have cherished that propensity to poetry which is so natural to his genius, yet his mind, amidst all its splendid conceptions, is of an imperfect structure. His imagination is quite an overpoise for his judgment. Sanguine in his hopes, the world hath once and again disappointed him and ruined him, because he formed his opinions of men and the world rather from what they should be, than from what they really are; hence he is disappointed whenever he steps out to transact business with them. The vivacity of his imagination disqualified him also from study and research. Present any intricate question to him for solution, his mind grasps it and pervades it with the rapidity of thought, as it really is; but if it miss solution, he cannot return to it again. The powers of his mind are so disordered by the rapidity of their first application, that they cannot for a long time be again collected to reconsider the subject. His judgment, once baffled and overpowered, can hardly be brought again to renew the attack, or

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<sup>1</sup> Lockhart tells a droll story of Hogg: The shepherd was invited by Scott to dinner. He came dressed "precisely as any ordinary herdsman attends cattle to the market." Mrs. Scott, being in a delicate state of health, was reclining on a sofa. The shepherd, after being presented and making his best bow, forthwith took possession of another sofa placed opposite hers, and stretched himself thereupon at all his length, for, as he said afterwards, "I thought I could never do wrong to copy the lady of the house." His foul shoes and greasy hands smeared the chintz; but Hogg saw nothing. He dined heartily, and drank freely. He jested, sang, told stories. Soon the wine operated, and let loose his vulgarity. From "Mr. Scott" he got to "Sherra," from "Sherra" to "Scott," from "Scott" to "Walter," from "Walter" to "Wattie," and finished by calling Mrs. Scott "Charlotte," which, says Lockhart, "fairly convulsed the whole party."—ED.

if it does, it is with diminished force, and more uncertain action.—*William Hogg*.<sup>1</sup>

When Hogg visited London, a literary friend took him to the Opera, where the Shepherd soon gave unequivocal symptoms of drowsiness; yet to any inquiry implying a doubt of his feeling entertained, he replied, "Eh! I like it gae well, sir." When he did give his attention to any portion of the performance, his eyes were observed to be fixed on Mr. Costa, the conductor. At length he could restrain his curiosity no longer, but exclaimed, "Wha, and what the deil's that fallow that keeps aye *fugle-ing* yon?"—"Records of a Veteran."

### Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

1772-1834.

Coleridge's ballad of the "Ancient Mariner" is, I think, the clumsiest attempt at German sublimity I ever saw.—*Southey*.

The rapt One of the godlike forehead,  
The heaven-eyed creature.—*Wordsworth*.

I expect neither profit nor general fame by my writings; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own "exceeding great reward;" it has soothed my afflictions, it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments, it has endeared solitude, and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the Good and Beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.—*Coleridge*.

Though themes of innocence amuse him best,  
Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest.—*Byron*.

Coleridge has undoubtedly given considerable impulse to thought in this country, and dissipated the *ennui* which the more energetic minds felt in travelling over the smooth macadamized road of modern English literature, where every mile brought back the same prospect. . . . He put before them statements which they could not understand; hinted at mysteries; indulged in a strange uncouth phraseology which awakened attention as a new language, and first taught young minds their own weakness, and then encouraged them to undertake exercise which would

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<sup>1</sup> Hogg's elder brother



create strength. We are far from thinking Coleridge a safe or sound writer ; but he has done good : he opened one eye of the sleeping intellect of this country, and the whole body is now beginning to show signs of animation.—*Quarterly Review*.

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee, the dark pillar not yet named—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—magician, metaphysician, bard ! How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula) to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek or Pindar. . . .—*Lamb*.

I am grieved that you never met Coleridge ; all other men whom I have ever known are mere children to him, and yet all is palsied by a total want of moral strength. He will leave nothing behind him to justify the opinions of his friends to the world ; yet many of his scattered poems are such that a man of feeling will see that the author was capable of executing the greatest works.—*Southey*.<sup>1</sup>

I dislike his tergiversation and his subtleties. I *admire* his genius, but not the manner in which upon the whole he has used it ; I think him a martyr to indolence, to extremes, to disappointed enthusiasm, to a ready metaphysical faculty of over-refining, and talking on any side of any subject.—*Leigh Hunt*.

In Bridgewater I noticed a gateway, standing under which was a man corresponding to the description given me of Coleridge, whom I shall presently describe. In height he seemed to be five feet eight inches ; in reality he was about an inch and a half taller, though in the latter part of life, from a lateral curvature in the spine, he shortened gradually from two to three inches. His person was broad and full, and tended even to corpulence ; his complexion was fair, though not what painters technically style fair, because it was associated with black hair ; his eyes were large and soft in their expression, and it was by a peculiar appearance of haze or dimness which mixed with

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Mr. Taylor, of Norwich, the learned German translator, of whom Sydney Smith said, "It takes nine men to make a Taylor."—ED.

their light that I recognised my object. This was Coleridge. I examined him steadily for a moment or more, and it struck me that he neither saw myself nor any other object in the street. He was in deep reverie, for I had dismounted, made two or three trifling arrangements at the inn door, and advanced close to him before he seemed apparently conscious of my presence. The sound of my voice announcing my name first awoke him. He stared, and for a moment seemed at a loss to understand my purpose or his own situation, for he repeated rapidly a number of words which had no relation to either of us.—*De Quincey*.

You will see Coleridge ; he who sits obscure  
In the exceeding lustre, and the pure  
Intense irradiation of a mind  
Which, with its own internal lustre blind,  
Flags wearily through darkness and despair—  
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,  
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—*Shelley*.

No man has all the resources of poetry in such profusion, but he cannot manage them so as to bring out anything of his own on a large scale at all worthy of his genius. He is like a lump of coal rich with gas, which lies expending itself in puffs and gleams, unless some shrewd body will clap it into a cast-iron box, and compel the compressed element to do itself justice. His fancy and diction would long ago have placed him above all his contemporaries had they been under the direction of a sound judgment and a steady will.—*Sir Walter Scott*.

Coleridge was a marvellous talker. One morning when Hookham Frere also breakfasted with me, Coleridge talked for three hours without intermission about poetry, and so admirably that I wish every word he had uttered had been written down. But sometimes his harangues were quite unintelligible, not only to myself, but to others. Wordsworth and I called upon him one forenoon, when he was in a lodging off Pall Mall. He talked uninterruptedly for about two hours, during which Wordsworth listened to him with profound attention, every now and then nodding his head, as if in assent. On quitting the lodgings, I said to Wordsworth, "Well, for my part, I could not make head or tail of Coleridge's oration ; pray did you understand it?" "Not one syllable of it," was Wordsworth's reply.—*Rogers*.

He who has seen a mouldering tower by the side of a crystal lake, hid by the mist, but glittering in the wave below, may conceive the dim, gleaming, uncertain intelligence of his eye. He who has marked the evening clouds uprolled (a world of vapours) has seen the picture of his mind, unearthly, unsubstantial, with gorgeous tints and ever-varying forms.—*Haslitt*.

The "Opium-Eater" calls Coleridge "the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and most comprehensive that has yet existed amongst men." Impiety to Shakspeare ! treason to Milton ! I give up the rest, even Bacon. Certainly since their day we have seen nothing at all comparable to him. Byron and Scott were but as gun-flints to a granite mountain ; Wordsworth has one angle of resemblance.—*W. S. Landor*.

Coleridge learnt little from others, and wrought out the principles and elements of his composition, both in prose and poetry, from the stores of his own singular genius ; although in details he was at times, like Lord Byron, an unconscionable plagiarist. The supernatural imagery of his "Christabel," for example, is something of a peculiar and exquisite cast, which stands unrivalled in modern poetry. By the side of the mysterious Geraldine, the familiar spirits of Scott and Byron seem as corporeal and robust as the sturdy theatrical ghost which used to occupy the chair of Banquo at Macbeth's haunted feast. But the originality of the form of versification, first introduced to English readers by that poem, seems a little more questionable, although contended for by the admirers of the writer. Whether the first edition of Goethe's "Faust," published in 1790, could have been known to the author of "Christabel" before his visit to Germany (the first part of it having been written, according to himself, in 1797), we do not know : probably the forthcoming account of his life will clear up all doubts on that point. If not, it is a curious coincidence that the two writers should have been each the first to produce, in his respective country, that singular metre now so fashionable, in which the verse is measured, not by syllables, but by cadences ; and that both should have dedicated it to similar subjects of wild, unearthly interest. This would not be the only unacknowledged debt due from Coleridge to Goethe. There is in the "Friend" a splendid passage, describing the temptations of Luther in his cell at Wartburg, which, although more high wrought, more varied and animated, is entirely borrowed, in substance, from that scene in "Faust" where the doctor is

introduced labouring on a translation of the New Testament. Such plagiarisms are, we fear, common enough throughout Coleridge's works. In some recent papers respecting him, published in one of the monthly magazines, the writer (one of the few to be found in England who is qualified to detect thefts from a store so little explored) asserts that whole passages in the "Biographia Literaria" are mere translations, without acknowledgment, from Schelling.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1835.

The Phenomenon, and the Monarch of the Monologue.—*Professor Wilson*.

There is one region in which imagination has ever loved to walk—now in glimmer and now in gloom, and now even in daylight; but it must be a night-like day—where Coleridge surpasses all poets but Shakspeare—nor do we fear to say where he equals Shakspeare. That region is the preternatural. Some of Scott's works strongly excite the feelings of superstitious fear and traditional awe. . . . But in prodigious power and irresistible, the "Ancient Mariner" bears off the bell from them all, which he tolls till the sky grows too dismal to be endured; and what witch at once so foul and so fair, so felt to be fatal in her fearful beauty, an apparition of bliss and of bale—as the stately Lady Geraldine? What angel, in her dread, so delicate as she—the Dove of her own Dream—fascinated to death by that hissing serpent—like the meek, pure, pious Christabel, whose young virgin life has been wholly dedicated to her Father and her God?—*Blackwood*, 1834.

Spirit ! so oft in radiant freedom soaring  
High through seraphic mysteries unconfined,  
And oft a diver through the deeps of mind,  
Its caverns, far below its waves, exploring;  
And oft such strains of breezy music pouring,  
As, with the floating sweetness of their sighs,  
Could still all fevers of the heart, restoring  
Awhile that freshness left in Paradise;  
Say, of these glorious wanderings what the goal?  
What the rich fruitage, to man's kindred soul  
From toil of thine bequeathed?—Oh, strong, and high,  
And sceptred intellect ! thy goal confest  
Was the Redeemer's cross—thy last bequest,  
One lesson, breathing thence profound humility !

*Mrs. Hemans.*

## Robert Southey.

1774-1843.

Southey I have not seen much of. His appearance is *epic*, and he is the only existing entire man of letters. All the others have some pursuits annexed to their authorship. His manners are mild, but not those of a man of the world, and his talents of the first order. His prose is perfect. Of his poetry there are various opinions; there is, perhaps, too much of it for the present generation; posterity will probably select. He has passages equal to anything. At present he has a *party*, but no public—except for his prose writings.—*Byron*.<sup>1</sup>

His poems, taken in the mass, stand far higher than his prose works. His official Odes, indeed, among which the "Vision of Judgment" must be classed, are, for the most part, worse than Pye's, and as bad as Cibber's; nor do we think him generally happy in short pieces. But his longer poems, though full of faults, are nevertheless very extraordinary productions. We doubt greatly whether they will be read fifty years hence; but that, if they are read they will be admired, we have no doubt whatever.—*Macaulay*.

A gentleman who is distinguished, among many other talents, for an unrivalled felicity in expressing the peculiar manner of authors whom he translates or imitates.—*Hallam*.

Whether he traced historic truth with zeal  
For the State's guidance or the Church's weal;  
Or fancy, disciplined by studious art,  
Informed his pen, or wisdom of the heart,  
Or judgments sanctioned in the patriot's mind  
By reverence for the rights of human kind,  
Large were his aims.—*Wordsworth*.

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<sup>1</sup> You Bob! are rather insolent, you know,  
At being disappointed in your wish  
To supersede all warblers here below,  
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;  
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,  
And tumble downward like the flying fish,  
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,  
And fall, for lack of moisture, quite a-dry, Bob!—"Don Juan."

Southey, whom I had never seen before, I liked much ; he is very pleasant in his manner, and a man of great reading in old books, poetry, chronicles, memoirs, &c., &c., particularly Spanish and Portuguese.—*Wordsworth.*

I like him exceedingly ; he has the finest poetical countenance, features unusually high, and somewhat strong though regular ; a quantity of bushy black hair, worn carelessly, but not with affected negligence ; deep-set, but very animated black eyes, and a countenance serious and collected, but kindling into ardour when animated in conversation. I have heard Southey called silent and restrained ; I did not find him so ; he talked easily and much, without seeming in the least consequential or saying a single word for effect. On the contrary, he converses with the feeling and earnestness of one who speaks to relieve a full mind.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

I believe you are right about Southey's poetry, and cry mercy to it accordingly. He went to it too mechanically, and with too much nonchalance ; and the consequence was, a vast many words to little matter. Nor had he the least music in him at all. The consequence of which was, that he wrote prose out into lyrical wild shapes, and took the appearance of it for verse.—*Leigh Hunt.*

There is a want of the spiritual in his writing. Beautiful fancy, and tender feeling, and sometimes deep devotion there are ; but still there lacks that spirit, that essence of the soul, which makes Wordsworth and many of the poems of Lord Byron a never satiating aliment.—*W. Howitt.*

He has fancy, imagination, taste—he is facile and flowing in his versification—most musical, if you will—but he is too smooth and level, he seldom or never rises with his subject ; he will stand criticism as far as words go, but no further ; he moves, but does not touch the heart. One reads him with delight once, but never takes him up a second time.—*Shelley.*

In all his domestic relations Southey was the most amiable of men ; but he had no general philanthropy : he was what you call a *cold man*. He was never happy except when reading a book or making one. Coleridge once said to me, "I can't think of Southey without seeing him either using or mending a pen."—*Rogers.*

A few years ago some young men of Oxford and Cambridge formed the design of going to America in order to realize a *Pantisocracy*. They intended to devote themselves to litera-

ture and agriculture; to accumulate no property, but have a common stock. Of this number were two very ingenious modern poets, Robert Southey, the author of an epic poem entitled "Joan of Arc," and other poems, and S. T. Coleridge, the author of a volume of poems. These two young poets are equally distinguished for their ardent love of literature; the former more remarkable for his powers of description and for exciting the softer feelings of benevolence; the latter for rich and powerful imagination.—*George Dyer*.

The true character of Southey. . . . is not to be sought in his greater poems, nor in the set tasks of his laureate workmanship. These are elaborate studies—exercises of literary skill. The spirit of the poet is to be found in his minor pieces, the more vigorous and less trained offspring of his genius. First and foremost among these are his ballads. In them he is really an original and creative writer.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1839.

That scheme of head, heart, and habitual demeanour, which in his early manhood and first controversial writings, Milton, claiming the privilege of self-defence, asserts of himself, and challenges his calumniators to disprove: this will his school-mates, his fellow-collegians, and his maturer friends, with a confidence proportioned to the intimacy of their knowledge, bear witness to as again realized in the life of Robert Southey. But still more striking to those who, by biography or by their own experience are familiar with the general habits of genius, will appear the poet's matchless industry and perseverance in his pursuits; the worthiness and dignity of those pursuits; his generous submission to tasks of transitory interest, or such as *his* genius alone could make otherwise; and that having thus more than satisfied the claims of affection or prudence, he should yet have made for himself time and power to achieve more, and in more various departments, than almost any other writer has done, though employed wholly on subjects of his own choice and ambition. But as Southey possesses, and is not possessed by, his genius, even so is he master even of his virtues. The regular and methodical tenor of his daily labours, which would be deemed rare in the most mechanical pursuits, and might be envied in the mere man of business, loses all semblance of formality in the dignified simplicity of his manners, in the spring and healthful cheerfulness of his spirits. Always employed, his friends find him always at leisure. No less punctual in trifles than steadfast in the per-

formance of highest duties, he inflicts none of those small pains and discomforts which irregular men scatter about them, and which, in the aggregate, so often become formidable obstacles both to happiness and utility: while, on the contrary, he bestows all the pleasures, and inspires all that ease of mind in those around him, or connected with him, which perfect consistency, and (if such a word might be framed) absolute *reliability*, equally in small as in great concerns, cannot but inspire and bestow; when this, too, is softened, without being weakened, by kindness and gentleness. I know few men who so well deserve the character which an ancient attributes to Marcus Cato—namely, that he was likest virtue, inasmuch as he seemed to act aright, not in obedience to any law or outward motive, but by the necessity of a happy nature, which could not act otherwise. As son, brother, husband, father, master, friend, he moves with firm yet light steps, alike unostentatious, and alike exemplary. As a writer, he has uniformly made his talents subservient to the best interests of humanity, of public virtue, and domestic piety: his cause has ever been the cause of pure religion and of liberty, of national independence and of national illumination.—*Coleridge*.

## Charles Lamb.

1775–1834.

Charles Lamb, born in the Inner Temple, 10th of February, 1775, educated in Christ's Hospital; afterwards a clerk in the Accountant's Office, East India House; pensioned off from that service 1825, after 33 years' service; is now a gentleman at large; can remember few specialities in his life worth noting, except that he once caught a swallow flying (*teste sua manu*); below the middle stature; cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion; stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism or a poor quibble, than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libelled as a person always aiming at wit, which, as he told a dull fellow that charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dullness. A small eater, but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper berry; was a fierce smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out,



emitting only now and then a casual puff. Has been guilty of obtruding upon the public a tale in prose, called "Rosamund Gray;" a dramatic sketch, entitled "John Woodvil;" a "Farewell Ode to Tobacco;" with sundry other poems and light prose matter, collected in two slight crown octavos, and pompously christened "His Works," though in fact they were his recreations, and his true works may be found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios. He is also the true "Elia," whose essays are extant in a little volume, published a year or two since, and rather better known from that name without a meaning, than from anything he has done or can hope to do in his own. He also was the first to draw attention to the old English dramatists in a work called "Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who lived about the time of Shakspeare," published about fifteen years since.—*Charles Lamb.*

At the centre of his being, lodged  
A soul by resignation sanctified.

\* \* \* \* \*

O, he was good, if e'er a good man lived !

*Wordsworth.*

We admire his genius ; we love the kind nature which appears in all his writings ; and we cherish his memory as much as if we had known him personally.—*Macaulay.*

In his countenance you might sometimes read—what may occasionally be read on all foreheads—the letters and lines of old, forgotten calamity. Yet there was at the bottom of his nature a buoyant self-restraining strength ; for though he encountered frequent seasons of mental distress, his heart recovered itself in the interval, and rose and sounded like music played to a happy tune. Upon fit occasion his lips could shut in a firm fashion ; but the gentle smile that played about his face showed that he was always ready to relent. His quick eye never had any sullenness ; his mouth, tender and tremulous, showed that there could be nothing cruel or inflexible in his nature.—*Procter.*

His sensibility to strong contrasts was the foundation of his humour, which was that of a wit at once melancholy and willing to be pleased.—*Leigh Hunt.*

He would beard a superstition and shudder at the old phantasm while he did it. One could have imagined him cracking a joke in the teeth of a ghost, and then melting into thin air himself out of sympathy with the awful.—*Ibid.*

His style runs pure and clear, though it may often take an underground course, or be conveyed through old-fashioned conduits. . . . There is a fine tone of chiaro-oscuro, a moral perspective in his writings. He delights to dwell on that which is fresh to the eye of memory; he yearns after and covets what smooths the frailty of human nature. That touches him most nearly which is withdrawn to a certain distance, which verges on the border of oblivion; that piques and provokes his fancy most which is hid from a superficial glance. That which, though gone by, is still remembered, is in his view more genuine, and has given more signs that it will live, than a thing of yesterday that may be forgotten to-morrow. Death has in this sense the spirit of life in it; and the shadowy has to our author something substantial.—*Hazlitt*.

Lamb was the slave of quip and whimsey; he stuttered out puns to the detriment of all serious conversation, and twice or so in the year he was overtaken in liquor. Well, in spite of these things, perhaps on account of these things, I love his memory. For love and charity ripened in that nature as peaches ripen on the wall that fronts the sun. Although he did not blow his trumpets in the corners of the streets, he was tried as few men are, and fell not. He jested that he might not weep. He wore a martyr's heart beneath his suit of motley.—*A. Smith*.

Lamb stuttered his quaintness in snatches, like the fool in "Lear," and with equal beauty.—*B. R. Haydon*.

Lamb's wit requires a word or two of analysis for itself. Wit is not humour, nor is humour wit. Cunning is neither, and the grotesque is a fourth power greater than all. Lamb had all these, not separately each as such, but massed together in the strangest intellectual compound seen in man. And even besides these he had an intellectual something—a *Lambism*—about him, which defied naming or description. He stammered—the stammer went for something in producing the effect; he would adjure a small piece for the nonce—it gave weight; perhaps he drank a glass of punch; believe us, it all told. It follows that Lamb's good things cannot be repeated.—*Quarterly Review*, 1835.

Believe me, no one is competent to judge of poor dear Charles who has not known him long and well, as I have done. His heart is as whole as his head. The wild words which sometimes came from him on religious subjects might startle

you from the mouth of any other man ; but in him they are mere flashes of firework. If an argument seems to him not wholly true, he will burst out in that odd way ; yet his will—the inward man—is, I well know, profoundly religious and devout. Catch him when alone, and the great odds are you will find him with the Bible or an old divine before him—or may be, and that is the next door in excellence, an old English poet : in such is his pleasure.—*Coleridge, "Table Talk"*

Once and once only have I seen thy face,  
 Elia ! Once only has thy tripping tongue  
 Run o'er my heart, yet never has been left  
 Impression on it stronger or more sweet.  
 Cordial old man ! what youth was in thy years,  
 What wisdom in thy levity, what soul  
 In every utterance of thy purest breast !  
 Of all that ever wore man's form, 'tis thee  
 I first would spring to at the gates of heaven.  
*W. S. Landor.*

## Jane Austen.

1775-1817.

Shakspeare has neither equal nor second. But among the writers who . . . have approached nearest to the manner of the great master, we have no hesitation in placing Jane Austen, a woman of whom England may justly be proud. She has given us a multitude of characters, all in a certain sense commonplace, all such as we meet every day. Yet they are all as perfectly discriminated from each other as if they were the most eccentric of human beings.—*Macaulay.*

Miss Austen is only shrewd and observant.—*C. Brontë.*

One of the greatest writers, one of the greatest painters of human character, and one of the writers with the nicest sense of means to an end that ever lived.—*G. H. Lewes.*

By the way, did you know Jane Austen, authoress of some novels which have a great deal of nature in them? nature in ordinary and middle life, to be sure, but valuable from its strong resemblance and correct drawing? I wonder which way she carried her pail?—*Scott to Joanna Baillie.*

Miss Austen has never been so popular as she deserved to

be. Intent on fidelity of delineation, and averse to the commonplace tricks of her art, she has not in this age of literary quackery received her reward. Ordinary readers have been apt to judge of her as Partridge, in Fielding's novel, judged of Garrick. . . . She was too natural for them. It seemed to them as if there could be very little merit in making people act and talk so exactly like the people they saw around them every day. They did not consider that the highest triumph of art consists in its concealment; and here the art was so little perceptible that they believed there was none.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1830.

## Walter Savage Landor.

1775-1864.

Walter Savage Landor, remarkable it might be truly said both for his talents and the unsuccessful employment of them, with a name extensively known and productions universally unknown; having eloquence and dignity of style which men are willing to receive upon trust, and publishing books which meet with every kind of reception except a perusal.—*Church of England Quarterly Review*.

Ten accomplished men are esteemed by me a sufficient audience.—*W. S. Landor*.

His lack of spirituality is his chief defect. His elevation, when he is elevated, springs from the force of eloquence. He is nervous, bold in argument, unsparing of sarcasm. He enlivens his pages with wit, with anecdote, with jests; he passes adroitly from topic to topic; calls in to his aid sometimes sentiment, sometimes passion, sometimes reason; displays a degree of knowledge rarely possessed by an author—a familiarity with all times, and nearly all countries; a perfect acquaintance with the laws of arts and criticism.—*Douglas Ferrol*.

Walter Savage Landor is one of those men who are sent into the world strong to teach. Strong in mind and body, strong in the clear sense of the right and the true, they walk unencumbered by prejudices, unshackled by fears.—*W. Howitt*.

He is too violent, too intolerant in his censures, ever to admit of the playfulness of satire. The animosity by which he appears to be actuated against every statesman of his time is as injurious to his witticism as it is dishonourable to his judg-

ment. If it be true (as he himself assures us, and we will not here take it upon ourselves to dispute) that his "Conversations" are destined for immortality—if those "two fingers" and that "pen" mark out whomsoever he pleases for eternal applause or infamy—what black, hideous, and distorted portraits of some of the most illustrious of his contemporaries are fated to descend to future generations!—*Quarterly Review*, 1837.

Mr. Landor's mind is far from barren in feeling or in resources; but over the natural and (what might be) the useful growth of these there everywhere springs up a luxuriant crop of caprice, dogmatism, extravagance, intolerance, quaintness, and most ludicrous arrogance—like the red and blue flowers in corn, that, however they may dazzle the passenger's eye, choke up the harvest and mock the hopes of the husbandmen.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1824.

When a large portion of the prose literature of our time that has acquired celebrity, shall have lost its renown, or be remembered merely on account of an ephemeral celebrity, the "Imaginary Conversations" of Walter Savage Landor will live in honour and flourish far and wide. There are intellectual gifts and graces of no ordinary kind exhibited in his prose productions: wonderful acquirements, scholarship of a genuine kind—massiveness of mind—keenness and subtlety of perception—earnestness and enthusiasm—geniality of disposition—tenderness of heart, and a noble love of everything in nature good and beautiful. The poetry of Mr. Landor, in all probability, is not destined to the same immortality, and possibly few critics will imagine that any considerable portion of it is deserving even of passing commendation at the hands of his contemporaries.—*Dr. Madden*.

I had learned from his works to form a high opinion of the man as well as the author. But I was not prepared to find in him the courtly polished gentleman of high breeding, of manners, deportment, and demeanour that one might expect to meet with in one who had passed the greater portion of his life in courts. There is no affectation of politeness, no finikin affability in his urbanity, no far-fetched complimentary hyperbolic strain of eulogy in the *agrémens* of his conversation with women, and the pleasing things he says to them whom he cares to please.—*Lady Blessington*.

While I thank you for your introduction to Sir William Gell, I ought not to forget that to Landor, who was particularly kind

to me, and whom I liked exceedingly. One is at home instantly with men of real genius: their oddities, their humours, don't put one out half so much as the formal regularity of your half-clever prigs. But Landor, thanks to your introduction, had no humours, no oddities for me. He invited me to his villa, which is charmingly situated, and smoothed himself down so much that I thought him one of the best-bred men I ever met, as well as one of the most really able (pity, nevertheless, so far as his talent is concerned, that he pets paradoxes so much: he keeps them as other people keep dogs, coaxes them, plays with them, and now and then sets them to bite a disagreeable intruder).—*Lord Lytton, "Correspondence."*

Landor had not, after all, the power of expressing his thoughts in lucid and perspicuous English.—*Coleridge.*

## Matthew Gregory Lewis.

1775-1818.

Talked of poor Monk Lewis. His death was occasioned by taking emetics for sea-sickness, in spite of the advice of those about him. He died, lying on the deck. When he was told all hope was over, he sent his man down below for pen, ink, and paper; asked him to lend him his hat; and upon that as he lay, wrote a codicil to his will. Few men, once so talked of, have ever produced so little sensation by their death. He was ruining his negroes in Jamaica, they say, by indulgence, for which they suffered severely so soon as his back was turned; but he has enjoined it to his heirs, as one of the conditions of holding his estate, that the negroes were to have three additional holidays in the year.—*Thomas Moore's "Diary."*

A good-natured fopling, the pet and plaything of certain fashionable circles.—*Lockhart.*<sup>1</sup>

Lewis was fonder of great people than he ought to have been, either as a man of talent or a man of fashion. He had always dukes and duchesses in his mouth, and was pathetically

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<sup>1</sup> Lockhart speaks of "the brushwood splendour of 'The Monk's' fame." "The Monk" was certainly *the* most popular book of its day. Amongst its sincere and enthusiastic admirers were Byron and Shelley.—*ED.*

fond of any one that had a title. You would have sworn that he had been a *parvenu* of yesterday ; yet he had lived all his life in good society. . . . Mat had queerish eyes—they projected like those of some insects, and were flattish on the orbit. His person was extremely small and boyish—he was indeed the least man I ever saw, to be strictly well and neatly made. I remember a picture of him by Saunders being handed round at Dalkeith House. The artist had ingeniously flung a dark folding mantle around the form, under which was half-hid a dagger, a lantern, or some such cut-throat appurtenance ; with all this, the features were preserved and ennobled. It passed from hand to hand into that of Henry, Duke of Buccleugh, who, hearing the general voice affirm that it was very like, said aloud, “ Like Mat Lewis ! why that picture’s like a MAN ! ” He looked, and lo ! Mat Lewis’s head was at his elbow. This boyishness went through life with him. He was a child, and a spoiled child, but a child of high imagination ; and so he wasted himself on ghost-stories and German romances. He had the finest ear for rhythm I ever met with—finer than Byron’s.—*Sir Walter Scott.*

Oh wonder-working Lewis ! monk or bard,  
 Who fain wouldst make Parnassus a churchyard !  
 Lo ! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow ;  
 Thy Muse a sprite, Apollo’s sexton thou !  
 Whether on ancient tombs thou tak’st thy stand  
 By gibbering spectres hailed, thy kindred band ;  
 Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page  
 To please the females of our modest age ;  
 All hail ! M.P., from whose infernal brain  
 Thin-sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train ;  
 At whose command “ grim women ” throng in crowds,  
 And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds,  
 With “ small grey men,” “ wild yagers,” and what not ?  
 To crown with honour thee and Walter Scott :  
 Again all hail ! if tales like thine may please,  
 St. Luke alone can vanquish the disease.  
 Even Satan’s self with thee might dread to dwell,  
 And in thy skull discern a deeper hell.—*Byron.*

In Monk Lewis’s writings there is a deal of bad taste ; but still he was a man of genius.—*Sam. Rogers.*

Matthew Gregory Lewis, M.P. for Hindon, never dis-

tinguished himself in Parliament; but mainly in consequence of the clever use he made of his knowledge of the German language, then a rare accomplishment, attracted much notice in the literary world at a very early period of his life. His "Tales of Terror," the drama of the "Castle Spectre," the romance called "The Bravo of Venice" . . . but above all, the impious and libidinous novel of "The Monk," invested the name of Lewis with an extraordinary degree of celebrity during the poor period which intervened between the obscurity of Cowper and the full display of Scott's talents in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel"—a period which is sufficiently characterized by the fact that Hayley then passed for a poet. Next to that solemn coxcomb, Lewis was for several years the fashionable versifier of the time; but his plagiarisms, perhaps more audacious than had ever before been resorted to by a man of real talents, were by degrees unveiled: and writers of greater original genius, as well as of purer taste and morals, successively emerging, Monk Lewis, dying young, had already outlived his reputation.—*Notes to "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."*

### Rev. T. R. Malthus.

1776-1834.

I cannot read the name of Malthus without adding my tribute of affection for the memory of one of the best men that ever lived. He loved philosophical truth more than any man I ever knew—was full of practical wisdom, and never indulged in contemptuous feelings against his inferiors in understanding.—*Sydney Smith.*

Mr. Malthus tells us that the way to reduce our poor-rates is to persuade the lower orders to continence; to discourage them as much as possible from marrying; to preach wedding sermons to them, if they will marry, upon the immorality of breeding—that being a luxury reserved only for those who can afford it, and if they will persist in so improper and immoral a practice, after so solemn and well-timed a warning, to leave them to the punishment of severe want, and rigidly deny all parish assistance. No public relief is to be given to the starving infant; it is worth nothing to society, for its place will be presently supplied, and society therefore



has no further business than to hang the mother if she should shorten the sufferings of her babe, rather than see it die of want. The rich are to be called upon for no sacrifices; nothing more is required of them than that they should harden their hearts. That we may not be suspected of exaggerating the detestable hard-heartedness of his system, we present it in his own language.—*Southey*.

And Malthus does the thing 'gainst which he writes.—*Byron*.

For my part, I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon than go to heaven with Paley and Malthus.—*Shelley*.<sup>1</sup>

Is it not lamentable—is it not even marvellous—that the monstrous practical sophism of Malthus should now have gotten complete possession of the leading men of the kingdom? Such an essential lie in morals—such a practical lie as it is, too! I solemnly declare that I do not believe that all heresies, and sects, and factions, which the ignorance, and the weakness, and the wickedness of men have ever given birth to, were altogether so disgraceful to man as a Christian, a philosopher, a statesman, or citizen, as this abominable tenet. It should be exposed by reasoning in the form of ridicule. Asgill or Swift would have done much; but like the popish doctrines, it is so vicious a tenet, so flattering to the cruelty, the avarice, and sordid selfishness of most men, that I hardly know what to think of the result.—*Coleridge*, “*Table Talk*.”

Although Mr. Malthus himself, in his earlier publications, has perhaps fallen sometimes into the exaggeration which is natural to a discoverer, the error, if he has committed one, does not affect the practical conclusions which place him, as a benefactor to mankind, on a level with Adam Smith. Whether in the absence of disturbing causes, it be a tendency of subsistence or of population to advance with greater rapidity, is a question of slight importance, if it be acknowledged that human happiness or misery depend principally on their relative advance, and that there are causes, and causes within human control, by which that advance can be regulated. These are propositions which Mr. Malthus has established by facts and

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley, however, had a high opinion of Malthus' talents: “He is a clever man, and the world would be a great gainer if it would seriously take his lessons into consideration—if it were capable of attending to anything but mischief. But what on earth does he mean by some of his inferences?”—*Ed.*

reasonings which, opposed as they were to long-rooted prejudice, and assailed by every species of sophistry and clamour, are now admitted by the majority of reasoners, and even by a large majority of those who take their opinions upon trust.—*N. W. Senior.*

It is difficult to speak of his character in terms which would be thought extravagant by those who knew him intimately, and who, after all, are the only judges of it. . . . His temper was so mild and placid, his allowances for others so large and considerate, his desires so moderate, and his command over his own passions so complete, that the writer of this article, who has known him intimately for nearly fifty years, scarcely ever saw him ruffled, never angry, never above measure elated or depressed.—*Bishop of Chichester, 1836.*

His mild and benevolent form is often before us. God forbid that we should forfeit the privilege of calling up into our chambers of imagery that so benignant presence! Taking him all in all, he was the best man and truest philosopher we were ever acquainted with. It is some consolation on the loss of him that we did not wait for his death to canonize his virtues.—*Edinburgh Review.*

## Thomas Campbell.

1777–1844.

Campbell excels chiefly in sentiment and imagery. The story moves slow and is mechanically conducted, and rather resembles a Scotch canal carried over lengthened aqueducts, and with a number of locks in it, than one of those rivers that sweep in their majestic course, broad and full, over transatlantic plains, and lose themselves in rolling gulfs or thunder down lofty precipices. But in the centre, the inmost recesses of the poet's heart, the pearly dew of sensibility is distilled, and collects, like the diamond in the mine, and the structure of his fame rests on the crystal columns of a polished imagination.—*Hazlitt.*

In the spring of 1832, I introduced Campbell to Lady

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<sup>1</sup> In Miss Berry's "Journal" I find :—"I dined at Mrs. Apreece's ; the party, Sydney Smith, Jeffrey, Malthus, &c. . . . I sat by Malthus, and had a good deal of conversation with him—interesting when one gets over his painful manner of speaking from wanting a palate to his mouth, and having had a hare-lip—not, however, at all unpleasant in appearance."

Blessington. The acquaintance commenced inauspiciously. There was a coolness in it from the commencement. . . . The lady, who was disappointed with Byron at the first interview with him, was not very likely to be delighted with Campbell—a most *shivery* person in the presence of strangers<sup>1</sup>—or to have her beau ideal of the poetic character and outward appearance of a bard realized by an elderly gentleman in a curly wig with a blue coat and brass buttons, very like an ancient mariner out of uniform and his native element. Campbell, on the other hand, had a sort of instinctive antipathy to any person who was supposed to be an admirer of Byron, and he could not divest his mind of the idea that Lady Blessington did not duly appreciate his own merits. After dining at Seamore Place twice, I believe, and freezing her ladyship with the chilliness of his humour, the acquaintance dropped, and left no pleasing recollections on the minds of either of the parties.—*Madden's "Memoirs of Lady Blessington."*

What has interested me of late has been a visit from Campbell, the sweet Bard of Hope. You must know his enchanting "Gertrude," his "Exile of Erin," and other unequalled lyrics. I wish I could share with you the satisfaction I felt in seeing him cheerful, happy, and universally welcomed and caressed in his dear "Queen of the North," from which he had been so long banished by the necessity of seeking the bread that perisheth elsewhere. He is one that has suffered much from neither understanding the world nor being understood by it. He encountered every evil of poverty but that of being ashamed of his circumstances—in that respect he was nobly indifferent to opinion; and his good, gentle, patient little wife was so frugal, so simple, and so sweet-tempered that she disarmed poverty of half its evils. This I fear was not the case with the bard of Hope, whose morbid sensibility wars with the kind and generous part of his character.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

The poet was now in his fifty-second year, and was still like what Byron described him ten years before, as already quoted. Every article of dress was neatly adjusted upon his compact,

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<sup>1</sup> In Miss Berry's "Journal" is the following :—"At dinner Sir James Mackintosh, Sir H. and Lady Davy, Mr. and Mrs. S. Locke, young Burney, and Campbell, the poet. The first and the last I saw for the first time. I am charmed with the first and not at all with the latter; he appears to think too much of himself."—ED

well-made figure, which, though under the middle size, was not so much so as to impress the beholder with diminutiveness. His wig, fabricated to simulate the natural hair, most exactly fitted a head which had been bald from early youth. His features were good and stamped with a certain acuteness; his lips thin, and perturbed upon any mental emotion; his eyes grey, and finely expressive of the genius he possessed, often speaking the language of his mind, particularly in the social circle, when he felt perfectly at home; his manner varied, on common occasions it was easy and agreeable, sometimes silent and pensive, but in general lively. He was at certain times fond of vivacious conversation amongst friends; still with much latent pride, and considerable self-respect, a trifle intervening, some trivial contretemps would throw him back upon himself in a moment, and then he would drop into reserve and silence in conversation before strangers, and many indeed of his friends, when he could rarely be drawn into giving an opinion upon anything.—*Cyrus Redding.*

As there is honour among thieves, let there be some among poets, and give each his due—none can afford to give it more than Mr. Campbell himself, who, with a high reputation for originality and a fame which cannot be shaken, is the only poet of the times (except Rogers) who can be reproached (and *in him* it is indeed a reproach) with having written *too little*.—*Byron.*

The conversation here turned upon Campbell's poem of "Gertrude of Wyoming," as illustrative of the poetic materials furnished by American scenery. Scott cited several passages of it with great delight. "What a pity it is," said he, "that Campbell does not write more, and oftener, and give full sweep to his genius! He has wings that would bear him to the skies; and he does, now and then, spread them grandly, but folds them up again and resumes his perch, as if he was afraid to launch away. What a grand idea is that," said he, "about prophetic boding, or in common parlance, second sight—

'Coming events casts their shadows before.'

The fact is," added he, "Campbell is in a manner a bugbear to himself. The brightness of his early success is a detriment to all his further efforts. *He is afraid of the shadow that his own fame casts before him.*"—*Washington Irving, "Abbotsford."*

I wonder often how Tom Campbell, with so much real genius, has not maintained a greater figure in the public eye

than he has done of late. . . . The author, not only of the "Pleasures of Hope," but of "Hohenlinden," "Lochiel," &c., should have been at the very top of the tree. Somehow he wants audacity, fears the public; and what is worse, fears the shadow of his own reputation. He is a great corrector too, which succeeds as ill in composition as in education. . . . Tom ought to have done a great deal more. His youthful promise was great. John Leyden introduced me to him. They afterwards quarrelled. When I repeated "Hohenlinden" to Leyden, he said, "Dash it, man, tell the fellow I hate him; but dash it, he has written the finest verses that have been published these fifty years." I did mine errand as faithfully as one of Homer's messengers, and had for answer, "Tell Leyden that I detest him, but that I know the value of his critical approbation." The feud was therefore in the way of being taken up. "When Leyden comes back from India," said Tom Campbell, "what cannibals he will have eaten, what tigers he will have torn to pieces!"—*Sir Walter Scott.*

Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope" has been strangely overrated. Its fine words and sounding lines please the generality of readers, who never stop to ask themselves the meaning of a passage. The lines

"Where Andes, giant of the western star,  
With meteor standard to the wind unfurled,  
Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world,"

are sheer nonsense,—nothing more than a poetical indigestion. What has a giant to do with a star? What is a meteor standard? but it is useless to inquire what such stuff means. Once at my house, Professor Wilson, having spoken of those lines with great admiration, a very sensible and accomplished lady who happened to be present begged him to explain to her their meaning. He was extremely indignant, and taking down the "Pleasures of Hope" from a shelf, read the lines aloud, and declared that they were splendid. "Well, sir," said the lady, "*but what do they mean?*" Dashing the book on the floor, he exclaimed, in his broad Scotch accent, "I'll be daumed if I can tell!"—*Wordsworth.*

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<sup>1</sup> This passage, we believe, is a general favourite. The last line deserves applause; a mountain, viewed from a distance, may be visible above as well as below the clouds, and the expression

"Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world,"

## Henry Hallam.

1777-1859.

To Henry Hallam, the Historian of the Middle Ages, of the Constitution of his country, and of the literature of Europe, this monument is raised by many friends, who, regarding the soundness of his learning, the simple eloquence of his style, his manly and capacious intellect, the fearless honesty of his judgments, and the moral dignity of his life, desire to perpetuate his memory within these sacred walls, as of one who has best illustrated the English language, the English character, and the English name.—*In St. Paul's, London.*

He has great industry and great acuteness. His knowledge is extensive, various, and profound. His mind is equally distinguished by the amplitude of its grasp and by the delicacy of its tact. His speculations have none of that vagueness which is the common fault of political philosophy. On the contrary, they are strikingly practical, and teach us not only the general rule, but the mode of applying it to some particular cases. In this respect they often remind us of the "Discourses" of Machiavelli.—*Macaulay.*

In philosophical analysis Mr. Hallam is not successful. He fails in his criticism of poetry and romance. With English poetry, excepting two or three of its greater names, we deem him to be very superficially acquainted. Nor will the student of our old Theology be satisfied with his treatment of that interesting department of English literature.—*Church of England Quarterly Review.*

Bless'd be the banquets spread at Holland House,  
Where Scotchmen feed and critics may carouse !  
Long, long beneath that hospitable roof  
Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept aloof ;

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is just as bold. But the passage is disfigured, to our taste, by the introduction of too many points of similitude with human grandeur. The "giant of the western star" shall be allowed to pass in all its vague magniloquence ; but the "*meteor-standard* to the winds unfurled" inevitably suggests ideas of military pomp, if not of military office, which accord but ill with the mountain's solitary and severe magnificence. Had the poet spoken of the Andes as a chain or assemblage of mountains, this image would have been more in keeping.—*Quarterly Review*, 1836.

See honest Hallam lay aside his fork,  
 Resume his pen, review his lordship's work ;  
 And, grateful to the founder of the feast,  
 Declare his landlord can translate, at least.—*Byron.*

## Lord Brougham.

1778—1868.

An easy flow of sterling, forcible, plain sense is indispensable ; and this, combined with great powers of sarcasm, gives Brougham his station.—*Sir F. Buxton's "Memoirs."*

Lord Brougham has contrived to make himself perhaps the most popular person in the country ; it has indeed been the sole herculean labour of his life to become so. He has manifested throughout his career a singleness of purpose in pursuing this object, backed by prodigious physical and great mental energies, which could scarcely fail of conducting him to success. See, then, the dizzy elevation he has attained—the Chancellorship of England, a position of paramount sway in the Government ; the object of fervent flattery, philosophical, oratorical, literary ; the idol of THE PEOPLE. We doubt whether any single individual in ancient or modern times ever aimed at levying contributions from so many and such apparently incompatible sources. And in order to do so it cannot be fairly said that Lord Brougham has been "everything by turns and nothing long," for he has throughout his varied and brilliant career subordinated everything—every occupation, every accomplishment, every failure, every triumph to the one object we have mentioned—popularity ; and that consummate and permanent.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1834.

I have always admired the man ; and the world, I verily believe, will pardon in him almost any aberration but that from the straight line of honour and truth. The name of Henry Brougham will be eminent in the history of England, and the great champion of the Education of the People is worthy to bear that name given by the gratitude of his compatriots to the first new discovered star.—*Professor Wilson.*

I recollect meeting Mr. Brougham well. I met him at Mr. Sharp's with Mr. Horner. They were then aspirants for political

adventures. Mr. Horner bore in his conversation and demeanour evidence of that straightforward and generous frankness which characterized him through life. You saw, or rather you felt, that you could rely upon *his* integrity. His mind was better fitted to reconcile discrepancies than to discover analogies. He had fine, nay, even high, talent, rather than genius. Mr. Brougham, on the contrary, had an apparent restlessness: a consciousness, not of superior powers, but superior activity; a man whose heart was placed in what should have been his head; you were never sure of him—you always doubted his sincerity.—*Coleridge*.

He differs from Sir James Mackintosh in this, that he deals less in abstract principles, and more in individual details. He makes less use of general topics, and more of immediate facts. Sir James is better acquainted with the balance of arguments in old authors—Brougham with the balance of power in Europe. If the first is better versed in the progress of history, no man excels the latter in a knowledge of the course of exchange. He is apprised of the exact state of our exports and imports, and scarce a ship clears out its cargo at Liverpool or Hull but he has notice of the lading. Our colonial policy—prison discipline—the state of the hulks—agricultural distress—commerce and manufactures—the bullion question—the Catholic question—the Bourbons or the Inquisition—domestic treason—foreign levy—nothing can come amiss to him. He is at home in the crooked mazes of rotten boroughs; is not baffled by Scotch law; and can follow the meaning of one of Mr. Canning's speeches.—*Haslitt*.

Look at the gigantic Brougham, sworn in at twelve o'clock, and before six has a bill on the table, abolishing the abuses of a court which has been the curse of the people of England for centuries. For twenty-five long years did Lord Eldon sit in that court, surrounded with misery and sorrow, which he never held up a finger to alleviate. The widow and the orphan cried to him as vainly as the town-crier cries when he offers a small reward for a full purse; the bankrupt of the court became the lunatic of the court, estates mouldered away, and mansions fell down. But in an instant the iron mace of Brougham shivered to atoms this house of fraud and of delay; and this is the man who will help to govern you; who bottoms his reputation in doing good to you; who knows that to reform abuses is the safest basis of fame and the surest instrument of power: who uses the



highest gifts of reason and the most splendid efforts of genius to rectify those abuses, which all the talent and all the genius of the profession have hitherto been employed to justify and protect. Look to Brougham, and turn you to that side where he waves his long and lean finger; and mark well that face which nature has marked as forcibly, which dissolves pensions, turns jobbers into honest men, scares away the plunderer of the public, and is a terror to him who doeth evil to the people.—*Sydney Smith.*

The schemes carried out by Brougham were rarely or never his own. He adopted the plans and hints of others. Just as in his speeches and writings he started no original idea amid his wonderful involution of language, his praise of new friends, or asperity of invective in dispraise of old, just so it was with his schemes. But it must be admitted that his unscrupulous boldness in execution corresponded with the intensity of his ambition, and that he thus played upon the public feeling with a tact worthy of a better motive. Even where the originality had not been disguised, and he admitted fractional participation, he ever contrived to grasp the larger share of praise.—*Cyrus Redding.*

Blundering Brougham.—*Byron.*

His command of language, extent of information on every subject, in every science, embracing the whole circle of knowledge; his felicity in extracting arguments and illustrations from that vast store of varied information; his never-failing memory, marvellous ability in grappling with all the difficulties of a question, of seeing at a glance all its bearings, of maintaining a state of perpetual mental activity, of encountering opposition, utterly fearless of all opponents, of bearing down on his enemies, of sending forth torrents of words of overwhelming eloquence, on any occasion, however sudden the emergency—these peculiar talents have seldom been equalled, have never been surpassed, in Parliament.—*Dr. Madden.*

Many are the claims of Lord Brougham upon the respect and gratitude of his countrymen; and many are the titles by which he will be known to posterity. As a philanthropist his name is imperishably associated with those of Clarkson and Wilberforce in their efforts for the suppression of the Slave trade, and he has given the chief impulse to the great cause of the Education of the people. As a statesman he has taken a leading part in counselling and carrying some of the most

important political measures of the nineteenth century. As an advocate whose zeal for his client scorned consideration of personal advancement, he will be known, if for nothing else, yet for his immortal defence of Queen Caroline. As a lawyer, his name is inscribed in the list of Lord High Chancellors of England—and he bounded to that lofty dignity from the ranks of the Bar, without having previously filled one of the subordinate law offices of the Crown. As a legislator, the country owes to his perseverance some of the most important improvements in her civil laws, and we allude more especially to the radical changes that have been effected in the law of Evidence. He is not only a great speaker, but an able writer, as our own century of volumes will testify; not only a politician, who has fought like a gladiator for fifty years in the arena of party strife, but a man of letters, and a mathematician of no mean attainments. We remember when it was the fashion for those who cannot conceive the possibility of excellence in more than one department of knowledge, to sneer at Lord Brougham as “no lawyer.” But this is best answered by the fact, that in hardly a single instance were his judgments in the Court of Chancery reversed on appeal by the House of Lords; and we will venture to say, that, although there had been lawyers like Buller, and Holroyd, and Bayley, and Littledale, more versed in the technicalities of their craft and the mysteries of special pleading—an abomination now well-nigh swept away—few have been more profoundly imbued with the principles of Common Law.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1858.

The style of Lord Brougham, though vigorous and sometimes happy, was too often diffuse, loose, and cumbrous, and always wanting in the exquisite accuracy and simplicity of Lord Lyndhurst.—*Roebuck's “Whig Ministry of 1830.”*

One other appointment must be noticed, that of Lord Brougham and Vaux to the Woolsack! And yet this, the excellent unfitness of which was pre-eminently apparent, may possibly be that which of all others may be best justified in the result. The talents of that extraordinary person may be as efficient for good, as they have heretofore been for evil—

“He has a stirring soul;  
Whatever it attempts or labours at  
Would wear out twenty bodies in another.”

*Quarterly Review*, 1831.

The leer of his eye, the general expression of his features, the exulting tones of his voice, showed that to behold Ministers writhing around him was to him a positive luxury, and one of the highest order,—“*Recollections of the Lords and Commons.*”

## William Hazlitt.

1778—1830.

He (Schlegel) is like Hazlitt in English, who *talks pimples*, a red and white corruption rising up (in little imitation of mountains upon maps), but containing nothing, and discharging nothing, except their own humours.—*Byron.*

Time and sorrow, personal ambition thwarted and fruitlessly driven back on itself, hopes for the world defeated and unrealized, changed the enthusiastic youth into a petulant, unsocial man.—*A. Smith.*

If a love of the better literature of the country should revive in England, Hazlitt will be more highly estimated than he has yet been, and more liberally judged.—*C. Redding.*

We are told that on the summit of one of those columns which form the magnificent ruins of Hadrian's Temple, in the plain of Athens, there used to dwell a hermit, who scarcely ever descended from his strangely-chosen abode, owing his scanty food and support to the mingled admiration and curiosity of the peasants who inhabited the plain below. Something like this was the position of William Hazlitt. Self-banished from the social world, no less by the violence of his own passions than by those petty regards of custom and society which could not or would not tolerate the trifling aberrations from external form and usage engendered by a mind like his; at the same time those early hopes born of the French Revolution, which first awakened his soul from its ante-natal slumber, blighted in the very fruition, and the stream that fed them flung back upon its source, to stagnate there and turn into a poisonous hatred of the supposed causes of their disappointment; his spirit refused to look abroad or be comforted. . . . He became, as regarded himself, personally heedless of all things but the immediate gratification of his momentary wants or wishes, careless of personal character, indifferent to literary fame, forgetful of the past, reckless of the future, and yet so exquisitely alive to the claims and the virtues of all

these, that the abandonment of his birthright in every one of them opened a separate canker in his heart, and made his life a living emblem of that early death which it foretokened.—*P. G. Patmore.*

Hazlitt came in at Northcote's one day (1812), and as he walked away with me he praised "Macbeth." I asked him to walk up. Thence began a friendship for that interesting man, that singular mixture of friend and fiend, radical and critic, metaphysician, poet, and painter, on whose word no one could rely, on whose heart no one could calculate, and some of whose deductions he himself would try to explain in vain. With no decision, no application, no intensity of self-will, he had a hankering to be a painter, guided by a feeble love of what he saw, but the moment he attempted to colour or paint his timid hand refused from want of practice. Having no moral courage, he shrank from the struggle, sat down in hopeless despair, and began to moralize on the impossibility of art being revived in England—not because the people had no talent, not because they had no subject-matter, not because there was no patronage, but because he, William Hazlitt, did not take the trouble which Titian took, and because he was too lazy to try.—*B. R. Haydon.*

He is your only good damner, and if ever I am damned, I should like him to damn me.—*Keats.*

His mind resembles the "rich stronde" which Spenser has so nobly described, and to which he has himself likened the age of Elizabeth, where treasures of every description lie without order, in inexhaustible profusion. Noble masses of exquisite marble are there, which might be fashioned to support a glorious temple; and gems of peerless lustre, which would adorn the holiest shrine. He has no lack of the deepest feelings, the profoundest sentiments of humanity, or the loftiest aspirations after ideal good. But there are no great leading principles of taste to give singleness to his aims, nor any central points in his mind around which his feelings may revolve and his imaginations cluster. There is no sufficient distinction between his intellectual and imaginative faculties. He confounds the truths of imagination with those of fact—the processes of argument with those of feeling—the immunities of intellect with those of virtue. Hence the seeming inconsistency of many of his doctrines. Hence the want of all continuity in his style. Hence his failure in producing one

single harmonious and lasting impression on the hearts of his hearers.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1820.

He revels in the delight of old English comedy, exhibits the soul of wit in its town-born graces, and the spirit of gaiety in its mirth, detects for us a more delicate flavour in the wit of Congreve, and lights up the age of Charles the Second with airy and harmless splendour.—*Talfourd*.

I confess that in the collection of essays entitled the "Round Table," it is with a certain uneasiness that I regard his imitation of the tone and style of the essayists of Queen Anne's days. His genius, to my taste, does not walk easily in ruffles and a bag-wig; the affectation has not that nameless and courtly polish which distinguished Addison, or even the more reckless vivacity of Steele. The last thing that Hazlitt can really be called is "the wit about town."—*Lord Lytton*.

## Thomas Moore.

1779—1852.

A gentleman of small stature, but full of genius, and a steady friend of all that is honourable and just.—*Sydney Smith*.

Moore has a peculiarity of talent, or rather talents—poetry, music, voice, all his own; and an expression in each which never was, nor will be, possessed by another. But he is capable of still higher flights in poetry. By-the-bye, what humour—what—everything in the "Postbag!" There is nothing Moore may not do, if he will but seriously set about it. In society he is gentlemanly, gentle, and altogether more pleasing than any individual with whom I am acquainted.—*Byron*.

You have contrived, God knows how! amidst the pleasures of the world, to preserve all your home fire-side affections true and genuine as you brought them out with you; and this is a trait in your character that I think beyond all praise; it is a perfection that never goes alone; and I believe you will turn out a saint or an angel after all.—*Miss Godfrey*.

A little, very little man—less, I think, than Lewis, and something like him in person. . . . His countenance is plain, but the expression is very animated, especially in speaking or singing, so that it is far more interesting than the finest fea-

tures could have rendered it. . . . It would be a delightful addition to life if Thomas Moore had a cottage within two miles of me.—*Sir W. Scott.*

As a poet, Moore must always hold a high place. Of English lyrical poets, he is surely the first. Beautiful specimens of lyrical poetry may indeed be found from the earliest times of our literature to the days of Burns, of Campbell, and of Tennyson, but no one poet can equal Moore in the united excellence and abundance of his productions.—*Earl Russell.*

Nothing but a short-hand report could retain the delicacy and elegance of Moore's language, and memory itself cannot embody again the kind of frost-work of imagery which was formed and melted on his lips. His voice is soft or firm as the subject requires, but perhaps the word gentlemanly describes it better than any other. . . . Moore's head is distinctly before me whilst I write, but I shall find it difficult to describe. His hair, which curled once all over it in long tendrils. . . . is diminished now to a few curls, sprinkled with grey, and scattered in a single ring above his ears. His forehead is wrinkled, with the exception of a most prominent development of the organ of gaiety, which singularly enough shines with the lustre and smooth polish of a pearl, and is surrounded by a semicircle of lines drawn close about it, like intrenchments against Time. His eyes still sparkle like a champagne-bubble, though the invader has drawn his pencillings about the corners; and there is a kind of wintry red, of the tinge of an October leaf, that seems enamelled on his cheek, the eloquent record of the claret his wit has brightened. His mouth is the most characteristic feature of all. The lips are delicately cut, slight and changeable as an aspen; but there is a set-up look about the lower lip—a determination of the muscle to a particular expression, and you fancy that you can almost see wit astride upon it. It is written legibly with the imprint of habitual success. It is arch, confident, and half diffident, as if he was disguising his pleasure at applause, while another bright gleam of fancy was breaking on him. The slightly tossed nose confirms the fun of the expression, and altogether it is a face that sparkles, beams, radiates.—*N. P. Willis.*

I thought Thomas Moore, when I first knew him, as delightful a person as one could imagine. . . . I never received

a visit from him but I felt as if I had been talking with Prior or Sir Charles Sedley.—*Leigh Hunt.*

Of all the song-writers that ever warbled, or chanted, or sung, the best, in our estimation, is verily none other than Thomas Moore.—*Professor Wilson.*

If Moore had been born and bred a peasant, as Burns was, and if Ireland had been such a land of knowledge, and virtue, and religion as Scotland is—and surely without offence we may say that it never was, and never will be,<sup>1</sup> though we love the Green Island well—who shall say that with his fine fancies, warm heart, and exquisite sensibilities, he might not have been as natural a lyrist as Burns; while, take him as he is, who can deny that in richness, in variety, in grace, and in the power of art, he is superior to the Ploughman.—*Ibid.*

Moore is a delightful, gay, voluptuous, refined, natural creature; infinitely more unaffected than Wordsworth: not blunt and uncultivated like Chantrey, or bilious and shivering like Campbell. No affectation, but a true, refined, delicate, frank poet, with sufficient air of the world to prove his fashion, sufficient honesty of manner to show fashion has not corrupted his native taste; making allowance for prejudices instead of condemning them, by which he seemed to have none himself; never talking of his own works, from intense consciousness that everybody else did.—*B. R. Haydon.*

Hogg came to breakfast this morning and brought for his companion the Galashiels bard, David Thomson, as to a meeting of *huz Tivdale poets*. The honest grunter opines with delightful *naïveté*, that *Muir's* verses are far owre sweet—answered by Thomson that Moore's ear or notes, I forget which, were finely strung. "They are far owre finely strung," replied he of the Forest, "for mine are just right."—*Lockhart's "Life of Scott."*

The sweetest lyric poet of this or perhaps of any age.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1821.

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<sup>1</sup> It will not be perhaps too much to say that the exact contrary to this in two respects is the truth. The virtue of the Irish is proverbial; their devotional fervour eminent. On the other hand, the immorality of the Scotch is not denied even by Scotchmen, whilst of their piety the best that can be said is, they observe the Sabbath.—ED.

## Ebenezer Elliott.

1781-1849.

Mr. Elliott's memory is very retentive, and he does not easily forget what he has once learned. Translations have made him familiar with the classic poets of Greece and Rome. Among the tragedians Æschylus is his favourite, whom he admires as the most original and sublime of the Athenian dramatic writers. His reading is extensive, and it has not been confined to poetry. History and political economy seem to have been his favourite studies ; the latter has inspired some of his most admired productions. He writes prose as well as verse, and the style of some of his Letters on the Corn Laws has the condensed fire and energy of Junius, less polished indeed, but equally pointed and severe.—*R. Chambers.*

In conversation he is rapid, and short ; his sentences, when he is animated by the subject on which he is speaking, have all the force and brevity of Spartan oratory ; they are words of flame, and in his predictions of calamity and woe—as, in his opinion, a necessary consequence of adhering to the present system of politics—it may be truly said in his own language, “his gloom is fire.” In argument every muscle of his face is eloquent ; and when his cold blue eye is fired with indignation, it resembles a wintry sky flashing with lightning ; his dark bushy eyebrows writhing almost like the thunder-cloud torn by the tempest.—*Anon.*

Perhaps no man's spirit and presence are so entirely the spirit and presence of his poetry. Unlike many who could be named, who drilled from youth into the spirit and tone of the gay circles that they frequent, present that spirit and tone there, and reserve the spirit and tone of the poet for the closet—men of two worlds, in the world of the world, in the closet in the world of the mind—Ebenezer Elliott has conversed too much with Nature, and with men in their rough, unsophisticated nature, to have merged one jot of his earnestness into conventionalism of tone or manner. In society and out of it he is one and the same—the poet and the man—*W. Horwitt.*

The works of this Corn-Law Rhymer we might liken rather to some little fraction of a rainbow, hues of joy and harmony painted out of troublous tears. No round full bow indeed ;



gloriously spanning the heavens, shone on by the full sun, and, with seven-striped, gold-crimson border (as is in some sort the office of poetry) dividing Black from Brilliant ; not such ; alas, still far from it ! Yet, in very truth, a little prismatic blush, glowing genuine among the wet clouds, which proceeds, if you will, from a sun, cloud-hidden, yet indicates that a sun does shine, and above those vapours, a whole azure vault and celestial firmament stretch serene.—*Carlyle.*

Eben is true as steel to his creed and faith—you may bend but not break him—and the critic who throws cold water on him, only hears a hissing of red-hot iron, that loses none of its heat, though it grey-blues its colour. His poetry is polluted and perverted—some not unfriendly critics have said, by politics. No. It is polluted by nothing—for in it there is no pollution. Perverted it may be, and is, but what mind of mortal man is free from perversion ? And who has not seen an apple tree with distorted branches all awry, nevertheless laden with blossoms, and better, bowed down with fruit. We are willing to take such men as Ebenezer Elliott as we find them.—*Wilson.*

He curses his political opponents with his whole heart and soul. He pillories them, and pelts them with dead cats and rotten eggs. The earnestness of his mood has a certain terror in it for the meek and quiet people. His poems are of the angriest, but their anger is not altogether undivine. His scorn blisters and scalds, his sarcasm flays ; but then outside nature is constantly touching him with a summer breeze, or a branch of pink and white apple-blossom, and his mood becomes tenderness itself. He is far from being lachrymose ; and when he is pathetic he affects one as when a strong man sobs. His anger is not nearly so frightful as his tears. I cannot understand why Elliott is so little read. Other names not particularly remarkable I meet in the current reviews—his never. His book stands on my shelf, but on no other have I seen it. This I think strange, because apart from the intrinsic value of his verse, *as* verse, it has an historical value. Evil times and embittered feelings, now happily passed away, are preserved in his books, like Pompeii and Herculaneum in Vesuvian lava. Hewasapoet of the poor, but in a quite peculiar sense. . . . Elliott is the poet of the English artisans—men who read newspapers and books, who are members of mechanics' institutes, who attend debating societies, who discuss political measures and

political men, who are tormented by ideas. . . . It is easier to find poetry beneath the blowing hawthorn than beneath the plumes of the factory or furnace smoke. In such uninviting atmospheres Ebenezer Elliott found his ; and I am amazed that the world does not hold it in greater regard, if for nothing else than its singularity.—*Alexander Smith.*

## Washington Irving.

1783–1859.

To a true poet-heart add the fun of Dick Steele—  
Throw in all of Addison *minus* the chill,  
With the whole of that partnership's stock and goodwill,  
Mix well, and while stirring hum o'er as a spell,  
The fine *old* English Gentleman, simmer it well,  
Sweeten just to your own private liking, then strain  
That only the finest and clearest remain ;  
Let it stand out of doors till a soul it receives  
From the warm lazy sun loitering down through green leaves,  
And you'll find a choice nature, not wholly deserving  
A name either English or Yankee—just Irving.—*Lowell.*

His later works are beautiful, but they are English ; and the pictures they contain cannot stand beside those drawn of English scenery, character, and manners, by our great native artists without an uncertain faintness seeming to steal over them, that impairs their effect, by giving them the air, if not of copies, of imitations. "Yet that not much," for Washington Irving, as he thinks and feels, so does he write, more like us than we could have thought it possible an American should do, while his fine natural genius preserves in a great measure his originality.—*Professor Wilson, 1832.*

When you see Tom Campbell, tell him, with my best love, that I have to thank him for making me known to Mr. Washington Irving, who is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day.—*Sir W. Scott, Lockhart's "Life."*

The style of Mr. Washington Irving is always pleasing.—*Macaulay, "Essays."*

Throughout his polished pages no thought shocks by its extravagance, no word offends by vulgarity or affectation. All

is gay but guarded—heedless, but sensitive of the smallest blemish.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1829.

## Leigh Hunt.

1784–1859.

This cockney-bred setter of rabbits.—*Moore*.<sup>1</sup>

He is an honest charlatan who has persuaded himself into a belief of his own impostures and talks Punch in pure simplicity of heart. . . . He is a good man and a good father. . . . A great coxcomb and a very vulgar person in everything about him.—*Byron*.

Hunt is an extraordinary character and not exactly of the present age. He reminds me much of the Pym and Hampden times—much talent, great independence of spirit, and an austere yet not repulsive aspect.—*Ibid*.

One more gentle, honourable, innocent, and brave ; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil ; one who knows better how to receive and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive ; one of simpler, and in the

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<sup>1</sup> “Cockney-bred setter of rabbits.” The lines in which this sarcasm is found were provoked from Moore by an onslaught on the character of Lord Byron, after the death of the noble poet, in a book entitled “Lord Byron and his Contemporaries.” Hunt was subsequently ashamed of this book, and would have suppressed it. This confession was extorted from him by the reprinting of Tom Moore’s bitter lines in the *Times*. In a letter to that poet Hunt expresses his regret that the verses should have been reproduced. He was at that time busy in soliciting a pension, being in great want and in ill-health, and by no means desired just then to be written against, even in a revived composition. That the attack on Byron was so unfortunate as to admit of the worst constructions is proved by the opinions it provoked from the *Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh*, from Wilson, and others. Thornton Hunt thus excuses his father : “To dismiss the subject once for all, it may be remarked that if disappointment and the fervour of a new literary work—which often draws the pen beyond its original intention—led Leigh Hunt into a book which was too severe, perhaps too one-sided in its views, he himself after corrected the one-sidedness, and recalled to mind the earlier and undoubtedly the more correct impression he had had of Lord Byron.” Mr. Hunt refers perhaps to a letter in which Leigh Hunt says, speaking of Byron, “It strikes me that he and I shall become friends, literally and cordially speaking ; there is something in the texture of his mind and feelings that seems to resemble mine to a thread. I think we are cut out of the same piece,” &c.—ED.

highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners, I never knew.—*Shelley*.<sup>1</sup>

His style, in spite of its mannerism, is well suited for light, garrulous, desultory *ana*, half critical, half biographical. We do not always agree with his literary judgments; but we find in him what is very rare in our time, the power of justly appreciating and heartily enjoying good things of very different kinds.—*Macaulay*.

Hunt, whose every sentence is flavoured with the hawthorn and the primrose.—*A. Smith*.

I look upon the author of "Rimini" as a man of taste and a poet. He is better than so; he is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew—a matchless fire-side companion. I mean not to affront or wound your feelings when I say, that in his more genial moods he has often reminded me of you. There is the same air of mild dogmatism—the same condescending to boyish sportiveness in both your conversations.—*Lamb to Southey*.

I would rather partake of your bread and cheese, with a glass of Adam's ale, than of many another man's sirloin and port.—*Sheridan Knowles*.<sup>2</sup>

I *have* always venerated you as a poet; I believe your poetry to be sure of its eventual reward; other people, not unlikely, may feel like me, that there has been no need of getting into feverish haste to cry out on what is; yet you who wrote it can leave it and look at other poetry, and speak so of it: how well of you!—*Robert Browning*.

I thought him, with his black bushy hair, black eyes, pale face, and "nose of taste," as fine a specimen of a London Editor as could be imagined; assuming yet moderate, sarcastic yet genial, with a smattering of everything and mastery of nothing, affecting the dictator, the poet, the politician, the critic, and the sceptic, whichever would at the moment give

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<sup>1</sup> This Shelley writes in a dedicatory letter. We need not question its sincerity. He always speaks of Hunt in the warmest words. Take this:—

"One of those happy souls  
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom  
This earth would smell like what it is—a tomb."

*Letter to Maria Gisborne.*

<sup>2</sup> "I think Sheridan Knowles by far the best writer of plays since those whom we call our *old dramatists*."—*Rogers's "Table Talk."*

him the air, to inferior minds, of being a very superior man. I listened with something of curiosity to his republican independence, though hating his effeminacy and cockney peculiarities. . . . He relished and felt art without knowing anything of its technicalities. . . . In belles lettres, though not equal to Fuseli, he had a more delightful way of conveying what he knew. He had been educated at Christ's Hospital and was not deficient in classical knowledge, but yet not a scholar.—*B. R. Haydon.*

### Professor Wilson.

1785–1854.

If ever there was a man of genius, and of really great genius, it was the late Professor Wilson. From the moment when his magnificent physique and the vehement, passionate, ennuidispelling nature that it so fitly enshrined, first burst upon literary society at Oxford, at the Lakes, and at Edinburgh, there was but one verdict respecting him. It was that which Scott and other competent judges expressed, when they declared, as they did repeatedly, that Wilson had powers that might make him in literature the very first man of his generation. Moreover, what he actually did, in the course of his five and thirty years of literary life, remains to attest the amount and vigour of his faculties. In quantity it is large; in kinds most various. In the general literature of Britain a place of real importance is accorded to Christopher North, while his own compatriots—with that power of enthusiastic, simultaneous, and, as it were, national regard for their eminent men, either while yet living, or after they are just dead, which distinguishes them from their neighbours the English—have added him to the list of those illustrious Scots, whom they so delight to count over in chronological series, and whom they remember with affection. And yet not only in disinterested England, but even among admiring Scotchmen themselves, there have been critical comments and drawbacks of opinion with respect to Wilson's literary career, and the evidences of his genius that remain. . . . So far as I have seen, all the criticisms and drawbacks really resolve themselves into an assertion that Wilson, though a man of extraordinary natural powers, did not do justice to them by discipline—that he was

intellectually, as well as physically, one of those Goths of great personal prowess, much of whose prowess went to waste for want of stringent self-regulation, and who, as respects the total efficiency of their lives, were often equalled or beaten by men of more moderate build, but that build Roman.—*David Masson*.

His mind, it must be remarked, though gifted with only a few leading ideas, possesses the strange power of showing these once every month in a new shape, generally diluted into a lavish effusion of brilliant, though unpolished verbiage; and in this way he continues to keep up a constant succession of dashing, frothy articles in the work referred to.<sup>1</sup> I mentioned that Southey was reckoned the writer of the best or purest English in the present day; on the same principle Wilson may be reckoned among the coarsest. His frolicsome, loose style is exceedingly captivating, and has produced a host of imitators among young writers, not one of whom has approached him in point of talent or brilliancy; and the consequence has been, a perfect inundation of flippant, useless writing, in every department of periodical literature.—*R. Chambers*.

A man of great acquirements and powers.—*Byron*.

A writer of the most ardent and enthusiastic genius, whose eloquence is "as the rush of mighty waters," and has left it for others almost as invidious to praise in terms of less rapture, as to censure what he has borne along in the stream of unhesitating eulogy.—*Hallam*.

<sup>1</sup> Speaking of Professor Wilson's capital work, the "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*," a writer in *Blackwood* says: "Shall a false or affected modesty hinder us from saying in the same spirit what all the world knows, and feels, and confesses, that our limits will not allow us suitably to expatiate on the kindred merits of our own many Banquets—on the singular specimens of colloquial epideictic eloquence they exhibit—on the dramatic skill with which their tone is diversified, from the vague enthusiasm and mystic lore of Kempferhausen, to the more masculine simplicity and accurate distinctions of Buller; the professional harangue of Mullion; the grotesque imagery, wild rampant humour, and exquisite diction of Tickler; the sophistical subtleties and florid rhetoric . . . of the English 'Opium Eater;' the rich irony, the interrogatory slyness, the bold morality, the transcendent sublimity of North; and inspiring them all with breeze and sunshine from the old Forest, the Genius of the Shepherd; a more creative spirit in the pastoral power of nature than ever visited the groves of Academe or held communion with Plato, the Prince of Philosophers though he were—say more than Prince—the Poet."—"A Glance at the *Noctes of Athenæus*," 1834.

Glorious Christopher North.—*Earl Russell.*

Wilson looked like a fine Sandwich-Islander, who had been educated in the Highlands. His light hair, deep sea-blue eye, tall, athletic figure, and hearty hand-grasp, his eagerness in debate, his violent passions, great genius, and irregular habits, rendered him a formidable partisan, a furious enemy, and an ardent friend. His hatred of Keats, which could not be concealed, marked him as the author of all those violent assaults on my poor friend in *Blackwood*.—*B. R. Haydon.*

On the appearance of Mr. Wilson's "Isle of Palms," I was so greatly taken with many of his fanciful and visionary scenes, descriptive of bliss and woe, that it had a tendency to divest me occasionally of all worldly feelings. I reviewed this poem, as well as many others, in a Scottish review then going in Edinburgh, and was exceedingly anxious to meet with the author; but this I tried in vain for the space of six months. All I could learn of him was, that he was a man from the mountains of Wales, or the West of England, with hair like eagle's feathers, and nails like bird's claws, a red beard and an uncommon degree of wildness in his looks. Wilson was then utterly unknown in Edinburgh, except slightly to Mr. Walter Scott, who never introduces any one person to another, nor judges it of any avail. However, having no other shift left, I sat down and wrote him a note, telling him that I wished much to see him, and if he wanted to see me he might come and dine with me at my lodgings, in the road of Gabriel, at four. He accepted the invitation and dined with Grieve and me; and I found him so much a man according to my own heart, that for many years we were seldom twenty-four hours asunder when in town.—*James Hogg.*

To John Wilson, to the "Isle of Palms," the "City of the Plague," and of volumes of other beautiful poetry, it would be a delightful task to devote a volume. The biography of Professor Wilson, whenever given to the world, if written as it should be, would be one of the most curious and intensely interesting books in the world. The poet and the periodical writer, Christopher North, at the *Noctes* and in his shooting-jacket, and John Wilson, the free, open-hearted, yet eccentric man, could, combined, furnish forth, with glimpses of his contemporaries and social doings, a most fascinating work.—*W. Howitt.*

The author of the elegy upon poor Grahame<sup>1</sup> is John Wilson, a young man of very considerable poetical powers. He is now engaged in a poem called the "Isle of Palms," something in the style of Southey. He is an eccentric genius, and has fixed himself upon the banks of Windermere, but occasionally resides in Edinburgh, where he now is. Perhaps you have seen him ; his father was a wealthy Paisley manufacturer—his mother a sister of Robert Sym. He seems an excellent, warm-hearted, enthusiastic young man ; something too much, perhaps, of the latter quality places him among the list of originals.—*Sir Walter Scott.*

Few creatures of the imagination have succeeded in impressing their image on the public with more distinctness of portraiture or a stronger sense of reality. Few indeed find any difficulty in calling up before the mind's eye, with nearly the same vividness as that of an ordinary acquaintance, the image of this venerable *eidolon*—who unites the fire of youth with the wisdom of age, retains an equal interest in poetry, philosophy, pugilism, and political economy—in short, in all the ongoing of the world around him in which either matter or spirit have a part ; and who passes from a fit of the gout to a feat of gymnastics, and carries his crutch obviously less for the purposes of use than of intimidation.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1843.

## Sir John Cam Hobhouse (Lord Broughton).

1786–1869.

Hobhouse is my best friend, the most lively and entertaining of companions, and a fine fellow to boot.—*Byron.*

Of Hobhouse I have a very slight opinion.—*Shelley.*

In his articles, which are numerous (he has been an indefatigable reviewer, dividing his favours with the most scurrilous ultra-Tory and the most violent ultra-Radical of the periodicals—*les extrêmes se touchent*) he stands quite alone—shines in unblushing effrontery of assertion and blackguardism of

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<sup>1</sup> Lo ! the Sabbath bard,  
Sepulchral Grahame, pours his notes sublime  
In mangled prose, nor even aspires to rhyme.—*Byron.*



language. In order to serve his purpose he condescends to pick up gossip from servants.—*Medwin.*

Hobhouse is known of old as a heavy hand; he comes down with his ponderous sledge-hammer contradictions, as though he were forging a thunderbolt, and with all his din and smithery, fuss and fury, only displaces a comma or corrects a date. The date and the comma are alike unimportant; not so the critic; whatever he does must be great, and while he thinks the circle around him are astonished at his hard hitting, they only wonder at his want of breath and temper.—*Hazlitt.*

Here lies a wrangler, but no orator; a demagogue, but no patriot; a minister, but no statesman; a pedant, but no scholar; a versifier, but no poet; a lampooner, but no satirist.—*Anon., quoted in "Life of Shelley."*

## Lord Byron.

1788–1824.

He makes virtue serve as a foil to vice; dandyism is (for want of any other) a variety of genius. A classical intoxication is followed by the splashing of soda-water, by frothy effusions of ordinary bile. After the lightning and the hurricane, we are introduced to the interior of the cabin and the contents of wash-hand basins. The solemn hero of tragedy plays Scrub in the farce. This is very tolerable and not to be endured. The noble lord is almost the only writer who has prostituted his talents in this way. He hallows in order to desecrate; takes a pleasure in defacing the images of beauty his hands have wrought, and raises our hopes and our belief in goodness to heaven only to dash them to the earth again.—*Hazlitt.*

Byron's countenance is *a thing to dream of*. A certain fair lady, whose name has been too often mentioned in connexion with his, told a friend of mine, that when she first saw Byron, it was in a crowded room, and she did not know who it was, but her eyes were instantly nailed, and she said to herself, *that pale face is my fate*. And poor soul, if a godlike face and godlike powers could have made any excuse for devilry, to be sure she had one.—*Lockhart's "Life of Scott."*

He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. He is cheerful, frank,

and witty ; his more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication.—*Shelley*.

The teeth-grinding, glass-eyed, lone Caloyer.—*Carlyle*.

Of the work that I have done it becomes me not to speak, save only as relates to the Satanic school, and its Coryphæus, the author of "Don Juan." I have held up that school to public detestation, as enemies to the religion, the institutions, and the domestic morals of the country. I have given them a designation *to which their founder and leader answers* ; I have sent a stone from my sling which has smitten their Goliath in the forehead. I have fastened his name upon the gibbet, for reproach and ignominy as long as it shall endure. Take it down who can !—*Southey*.

He was a mystery in a winding-sheet, crown'd with a halo.

*Galt.*<sup>1</sup>

Thy heart, methinks,

Was generous, noble.—*Rogers*.

Byron occasionally said what are called good things, but never studied for them. They came naturally and easily, and mixed with the comic or the serious, as it happened. A professed wit is of all earthly companions the most intolerable. He is like a schoolboy with his pocket stuffed with crackers.—*Sir Walter Scott*.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Byron's was a versatile and still a stubborn mind ; it wavered, but always returned to certain fixed principles.—*Colonel Stanhope*.

Whatever rank be accorded to the genius of Lord Byron, it

<sup>1</sup> "Galt," says Christopher North, "is a man of genius, and some of his happiest productions will live in the literature of his country. His humour is rich, rare, and racy, and peculiar withal, entitling him to the character of originality—a charm that never fadeth away ; he has great power in the humble, the homely pathetic ; and he is conversant not only with many modes and manners of life, but with much of its hidden and more mysterious spirit." His chief and best work is the "Annals of the Parish." His "Life of Byron" excited the indignation and hatred of the poet's friends and admirers.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> In a touching and beautiful notice of Byron's death Scott said, "As various in composition as Shakspeare himself (this will be admitted by all who are acquainted with his "Don Juan"), he has embraced every topic of human life and sounded every string on the divine harp, from its slightest to its most powerful and heart-astounding tones. There is scarce a passion or a situation which has escaped his pen ; and he might be drawn, like Garrick, between the weeping and the laughing Muse."—ED.

was certainly not greater, nor in fact so richly developed, when Phillips painted the poet in a dress which he could never have worn except at a fancy ball, than it was when he startled the eyes of the Count D'Orsay as the wearer of a faded nankeen jacket and green spectacles. As he appears in the portrait of Phillips he was clearly an impostor; as he appeared to Count D'Orsay he was unquestionably honest and genuine. Yet there were many who having formed their notion of the man by a fantastic and impossible costume, lost a great deal of their admiration of the poet when they heard of the nankeen jacket and green spectacles.—*Lord Lytton*.

Much has been written about those unhappy domestic occurrences which decided the fate of his life. Yet nothing is, nothing ever was positively known to the public but this, that he quarrelled with his lady and that she refused to live with him. There have been hints in abundance and shrugs and shakings of the head, and "Well, well, we know," and "we could an if we would," and "if we list to speak," and "there be that might an they list." But we are not aware that there is before the world, substantiated by credible or even by tangible evidence, a single fact indicating that Lord Byron was more to blame than any other man who is on bad terms with his wife.—*Macaulay*.

The bosom of Byron never could hold the urn in which the muse of tragedy embalms the dead. There have been four magic poets in the world. We await the fifth monarchy.—*W. S. Landor*.

Byron's poetry is great—great—it makes him truly great; he has not so much greatness in himself.—*Thomas Campbell*.

He is extremely thin, indeed so much so that his figure has almost a boyish air; his face is peculiarly pale, but not the paleness of ill-health, as its character is that of fairness, the fairness of a dark-haired person—and his hair (which is getting rapidly grey) is of a very dark brown, and curls naturally.—*Lady Blessington, 1823*.

The strength of passion, the command of nervous expression, the power of searching the heart, the philosophy of life which his poems display, are wonderful. In the last of these attributes only Wordsworth has equalled or surpassed him.—*Earl Russell*.

His voice was such a voice as the devil tempted Eve with; you feared its fascination the moment you heard it.—*Mrs. Opie*.

There is a man, usurping lordly sway,  
 Aiming alone to hold a world at bay ;  
 Who, mean as daring, arrogant as vain,  
 Like chaff, regards opinion with disdain,  
 As if the privilege with him were found  
 The laws to spurn by which mankind are bound ;  
 As if the arm which drags a despot down  
 Must palsied fall before a Byron's frown!—*Joseph Cottle.*

With regard to Lord Byron's features, Mr. Mathews observed that he was the only man he ever contemplated to whom he felt disposed to apply the word *beautiful*.—" *Life of Charles Mathews.*"

I am convinced Byron's Italian excesses were not from love of vice, but experiments for a new sensation, on which to speculate. After debauchery he hurried away in his gondola and spent the night on the waters. On board a Greek ship, when touching a yataghan, he was overheard to say, "I should like to know the feelings of a murderer." This contains the essence of his moral character, and the assertion that he relished nothing in poetry not founded on fact, that of his poetical.—*Haydon.*

It would not be in the power, indeed, of the most poetical friend to allege anything more convincingly favourable of his character than is contained in the few simple facts that, through life, with all his faults, he never lost a friend ; that those about him in his youth, whether as companions, teachers, or servants, remained attached to him to the last ; that the woman to whom he gave the love of his maturer years idolizes his name ; and that, with a single unhappy exception, scarce an instance is to be found of any one once brought, however briefly, into relations of amity with him, that did not feel towards him a kind of regard in life and retain a fondness for his memory.—*Moore.*

His lordship's mode of address was peculiarly fascinating and insinuating—*au premier abord*—it was next to impossible for a stranger to refrain from liking him. The contour of his countenance was noble and striking : the forehead particularly so, was nearly white as alabaster. His delicately formed features were cast rather in an effeminate mould, but their soft expression was in some degree relieved by the moustachios of a light chestnut, and small tuft, *à la housard*, which he at that time sported. His eyes were rather prominent and full, of a dark blue, having that melting character which I have frequently

observed in females, said to be a proof of extreme sensibility. The texture of his skin was so fine and transparent that the blue veins, rising like small threads around his temples, were clearly discernible. All who ever saw Byron have borne testimony to the irresistible sweetness of his smile, which was generally, however, succeeded by a sudden pouting of the lips, such as is practised sometimes by a pretty coquette, or a spoilt child. His hair was partially grizzled, but curled naturally. In conversation, owing to a habit he had contracted of clenching his teeth close together, it was sometimes difficult to comprehend him distinctly; towards the conclusion of a sentence, the syllables rolled in his mouth, and became a sort of indistinct murmur.—*J. H. Browne, Blackwood, 1834.*

Mrs. Shelley expressed much admiration of the personal manner and conversation of Lord Byron, but at the same time admitted that the account in the *London Magazine* for September was faithful. She censured his conduct towards Leigh Hunt as paltry and unfeeling; spoke very slightly of his studies or reading; thought him very superficial in his opinions, owed everything to his memory, which was almost preternatural; said that he felt a supreme contempt for all his contemporaries with the exception of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and he derided and ridiculed even them; and was altogether proud, selfish, and even puerile.—*Charles Lamb's "Recollections."*

### Theodore Edward Hook.<sup>1</sup>

1788–1841.

I have before in my time met with men of admirable promptitude of intellectual power and play of wit, which, as Stillingfleet says,—

“The rays of wit gild wheresoe’er they strike;”

but I never could have conceived such readiness of mind and

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<sup>1</sup> The life of Hook represents the career of a man whose efforts to chase pleasure could not remove him from the pursuit of pain; and who, though we are told he wrote only for money, seems to have adopted literature rather for its distractions than its rewards. He was born in London, September the 22nd, 1788; and when old enough was put to Harrow, where he had the honour of being the schoolfellow and companion of Byron, from whose friendship, however, he received no further benefit than

resources of genius, to be poured out on the mere subject and impulse of the moment.—*Coleridge*.

Those who have attentively regarded the exhibition of a second-rate wit, cannot fail to have watched the solicitude with which he watches for an opening, the laboured ingenuity with which he leads the conversation round to a desired point,

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a satirical mention in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Here, by throwing a stone at an old lady who was dressing herself before a window, Hook may be said to have commenced the first of those "practical jokes" for whose perpetration he owes among us his chief renown—for the success of *John Bull* has been eclipsed by later and far more brilliant triumphs in journalism; whilst his novels are with great difficulty discovered by the side of James's and Mrs. Trollope's in the top shelves of country libraries; and, when discovered, with greater difficulty read. On the death of his mother, his charge devolved upon his father, by profession a musician, a man lax in his principles, and devoted to pleasure. All that the old man did for Theodore was to develop his poetical talent, of which he exhibited indications at an early age, by praising his poems and setting them to music. At sixteen Hook was the author of a play, rendered successful by the impersonation of an Irish character by the excellent comedian, Jack Johnstone. Now commenced his dramatic career. He wrote farces in which Mathews appeared, and comedies in which Liston took the leading parts. He wrote melodramas, burlettas, operas, for which his father found the music. He had soon achieved a reputation as a dramatist: and this reputation he improved by his brilliancy as a converser and his phenomenal powers as an improvisatore. His talents excited the notice of persons of influence and consequence, who invited him to their houses and offered him their friendship. Sheridan roared at his extempore recitations. Colman the younger laughed with envying approbation at his puns. After having proposed to two girls, by one of whom he was rejected, whilst the mother of the other refused her sanction, he procured, in 1812, the appointment of Treasurer to the Mauritius, with an income averaging 2000*l.* a year. But he had not been long abroad when certain discoveries tended to corroborate, in the opinion of those who were watching Hook, the assertion of Johnson that a punster is as bad as a pickpocket. A deficiency in the public chest to the amount of some thousands of pounds was detected: Hook was suspected of the appropriation of this money, arrested, and thrown into prison. His trial, both in the Mauritius and in England, extended over a great length of time; and at last, when worn out in mind and body, he was acquitted, but in such unsatisfactory language as to exhibit a strong presumption of his guilt in the minds of his judges. He was now a pauper; and having lived for nine months in a sponging-house, and for some considerable time "within the rules of the Bench," he settled himself at Somers Town, where he contracted an illicit connexion with a poor woman, who in a very short time imposed upon him the burden of five children. At this period he supported himself wholly by his pen. In 1820 was started the *John Bull*, a weekly Tory publication, of which the success was immediate. In a very short time the first five numbers went through several editions, the first and second numbers being kept in

and the care with which he husbands his good things, biding his time, and dealing them out frugally, so that none be wasted. In Hook the reverse of all this was conspicuous ; "there was no question detached to lead you into the ambuscade of a ready-made joke." Nor was his personal appearance less prepossessing than were his manners engaging ; he is described as being, at the age of twenty, "a slim youth of fine figure, his head covered with clustering curls," and though years as they rolled over his head, "rubbing," as he said, "nearly all the hair off it," added to a sedentary life, and a too free indulgence in the pleasures of the table, had robbed him somewhat prematurely of all pretensions to "the mould of form," the eloquent eye, the rich and mellow voice, joyous smile, and expressive play of feature, remained to the last. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the *accolade* was graciously bestowed, and the agreeable candidate received, after very slight probation, into the order of fashion.—*Rev. R. H. Barham.*

Really a man of talent.—*Byron.*

. . . . To this dinner Mr. Hook was invited. In the course of the day many persons sang, and Mr. Hook being in turn solicited, displayed, to the delight and surprise of all present, his wondrous talents in extemporaneous singing. The company was numerous, and generally strangers to Mr. Hook, but, without a moment's premeditation, he composed a verse upon every person in the room, full of the most pointed wit, and with the truest rhymes, unhesitatingly gathering into his subject, as he rapidly proceeded, in addition to what had passed

stereotype ; whilst the sale of the paper in six weeks had reached the large circulation of ten thousand copies. With little care and with but little economy Hook might have died an affluent man. But he was fond of wine ; he was fond of clubs ; he was fond of Crockford's, and of other gambling *salons*. He contracted debts which pressed heavily upon him, and was reduced at last to dispose of his share in the *John Bull* to satisfy his creditors. He remained, however, the editor of the paper on a salary not unequal to the wants or even the luxuries of a moderate man. But to Hook experience brought no wisdom. He still lived beyond his means ; he multiplied his bad habits ; he reversed the conventional hours, and turned night into day. From being a stout man he became so thin that he swathed himself in wrappers to give his form the resemblance of that bulk which had sometimes provoked the laughter of his friends. At last, reduced to a skeleton, with powers rendered languid by disease, with wit impaired by an unconquerable depression of spirits, he died on the 29th of July, 1841.—*Ed.*

during dinner, every trivial incident of the moment. Every action was turned to account ; every circumstance, the look, the gesture, or any other accidental effects, served as occasion for more wit. . . . Mr. Sheridan was astonished at his extraordinary faculty, and declared that he could not have imagined such power possible had he not witnessed it. No description, he said, could have convinced him of so peculiar an instance of genius, and he protested that he should not have believed it to be an unstudied effort had he not seen proof that no anticipation could have been formed of what might arise to furnish matter and opportunities for the exercise of this rare talent.—“*Life of Charles Mathews.*”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In most eras of English civilization there will be found to have existed an order of free, liberal, and buoyant spirits, who made it their especial diversion to disorder the affairs or excite the terrors of their fellow-creatures. If you go so far back as the days of the second Charles you will hear of a community of wits, of which Sedley, Buckingham, and Rochester may be instanced as good types, who amused the tedium of their lives by running naked about the streets, by erecting platforms and haranguing the populace in the garb of Punchinello, by sending anonymous libels upon wives to procure their desertion by their husbands. In later times you have the Mohocks, an innocent and harmless fraternity of drunkards, who scoured the town after nightfall, cudgelling old men, stripping girls, strapping stray children to posts, thrusting old women into casks, and rolling them down the nearest hill at hand. Another era produced the bellicose beau, a fellow in tarnished lace and paste jewellery, who drew his hanger upon timid or infirm people, who abducted girls and abandoned them in distant places, who forced quarrels upon peaceable folks by affirming monstrous lies, and then furiously cocking his hat and crying, “Dammé, d’ye doubt my honour?” Later on we come to a more harmless species of wag, who, unlike his progenitors, preferred wringing off knockers to wringing off noses, and who found more fun in giving an alarm of fire and witnessing the street fill with terrified people in their nightgowns, than in impaling boys or leaving old men for dead in the gutters. He and his fellows may be said to have been the fathers of that race of practical jokers which flourished about the first quarter of the present century. The crude hints of the sires were dexterously refined upon by the sons. The work of mischief was perfected by the illumination of wit and invention. Knockers indeed continued to be torn from doors, and bell-wires to be pulled or broken. But these arts, which a young generation of practical jokers had regarded with admiration as high and imperishable achievements, a more experienced generation taught itself to despise as practices beneath the notice or dignity of real genius.

To Theodore Hook the fine art of practical joking is more indebted for its development than to any of its numerous professors. Sheridan, indeed, suggested many improvements ; Charles Mathews enlarged its powers ; but Hook gave to it its height, its strength, its support. When he died it



Last night, after dinner, I rested from my work and read the third series of "Sayings and Doings," which shows great knowledge of life in a certain sphere, and very considerable powers of wit, which somewhat damage the effect of the tragic part. But Theodore Hook is an able writer, and so much of his work is well said that it will carry through what is indifferent. I hope the same good fortune for other folks.—*Sir W. Scott.*

Words cannot do justice to Theodore Hook's talent for

fell; and after languishing some time in the hands of a few indifferent quacks, perished, as a man perishes who has had his legs cut off.

Douglas Jerrold, in that witty series of sketches, "Men of Character," probably had Hook in his mind when he wrote "John Applejohn." From the twelfth chapter in that laughable story I transcribe a fragment to illustrate the character of the joker of the days, if not of the school, of Hook:—

"'What's the matter with your arm?' inquired Cramlington, with great concern.

"'Such rare fun last night—never had such glorious fun! Why weren't you with us? Ha! ha! such fun!' and his lordship flung himself back in his chair, and shouted with laughter.

"'Cramlington, staring with astonishment at the opened and injured jaws of nobility, exclaimed, 'My dear Slap, what's the matter with your teeth?'

"'Had three knock'd out last night—here they are though,' and his lordship produced three teeth, two single and one double, from his waist-coat-pocket: 'brought 'em off safe out of the gutter; and more than that, left the field with the pump-handle—such fun!'

"'Pump-handle!' exclaimed Cramlington. 'What! another?'

"'Yes—swore I'd have it. Carried off St. George's last night; that makes ten pump-handles at my chambers. Glorious fun! Must have a dozen though,' said the peer. 'However, you must come with us to-night.'

"'You know, my dear Lord Slap, that I am yours entirely, but to-night,' and Cramlington sought to excuse himself.

"'Must come! such sport in hand!—the crowning joke, d—me! the crowning joke! ha! ha! I've hired a stable ready to receive him,' said his lordship.

"'Him? whom?' asked Cramlington.

"'Billy Pitt! . . . .'

"'What Billy Pitt? Any rascally editor of that name?' inquired Cramlington.

"'Editor? D—n all editors! I mean Billy Pitt, the minister, out of Hanover Square,' answered his lordship. . . . 'Tired of street-door knockers and pump-handles; they're small game, d—n me! and make no noise now. But to carry off Billy Pitt—that will make something of a stir, I think!'

—ED.

improvisation; it was perfectly wonderful. He was one day sitting at the pianoforte, singing an extempore song as fluently as if he had had the words and music before him, when Moore happened to look into the room, and Hook instantly introduced a long parenthesis:

“And here’s Mr. Moore,  
Peeping in at the door,” &c.

The last time I saw Hook was in the lobby of Lord Canterbury’s house, after a large evening party there. He was walking up and down, singing with great gravity, to the astonishment of the footmen, “Shepherds, I have lost my *hat*!” —*Rogers*.

Like many fellows of most “excellent fancy,” “wont to set the table in a roar,” Hook—the humorist, all mirth and jocularly abroad—at home was subject to violent revulsion of feelings, to gusts of sadness, and fits of dejection of spirits, which temporary excitement, produced by stimulants, did not much tend to remedy or remove. . . . He ended his miserable career worried to death by creditors, attorneys, and bailiffs.—“*Memoirs of Lady Blessington*.”

I am glad Theodore Hook finds literature so profitable. His songs (for I will think them his) in *John Bull* used to divert me not a little. Perhaps it is too high a compliment, but when I hear of his being in confinement, I think of Prince Henry saying of Sir Walter Raleigh that none but his father would keep such a bird in a cage.—*Mrs. Grant’s “Letters.”*

His name will be preserved. His political songs and *jeux d’esprit*, when the hour comes for collecting them, will form a volume of sterling and lasting attraction, and after many clever romances of this age shall have sufficiently occupied public attention, and sunk, like hundreds of former generations, into utter oblivion, there are tales in this collection which will be read with, we venture to think, even a greater interest than they commanded in their novelty.—*Quarterly Review*, 1843.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In a paper on “Practical Jokes,” contributed to the “New Monthly Magazine” for 1837, of which he was then editor, he gives us some insight into the sort of joking which he practised with most relish. I epitomize the best of them. Number one, was tying a piece of meat very securely to the bell-handles “which dangle outside the gates of certain suburban

I think it ought to be remembered to her honour, that with all her foreign associations and habits, she never wrote a line that might not be placed on the book-shelves of any English lady.—*Mrs. Hall.*

Beneath Blessington's eyes  
The reclaim'd paradise  
Should be free as the former from evil ;  
But if the new Eve  
For an apple should grieve,  
What mortal would not play the devil?—*Byron.*

She expressed her opinions in short, smart, telling sentences ; brilliant things were thrown off with the utmost ease ; one *bon mot* followed another without pause or effort, for a minute or two, and then, while their wit or humour were producing the desired effect, she would take care, by an apt word or gesture provocative of mirth and communicativeness, to draw out the persons who were best fitted to shine in company.—*Dr. Madden.*

The novels of Lady Blessington are strongly characterized by the social phenomena of the times—they are peculiarly the *romans de société*—the characters that move and breathe throughout them are the actual persons of the great world ; and the reflections with which they abound belong to the philosophy of one who has well examined the existing manners.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1838.

WRITTEN AT GORE HOUSE.

Mild Wilberforce, by all beloved,  
Once owned this hallowed spot,  
Whose zealous eloquence improved  
The fetter'd Negro's lot.  
Yet here still Slavery attacks,  
Whom Blessington invites :  
The chain from which he freed the blacks,  
She rivets on the whites.—*Anon.*, 1835.

## J. F. Cooper.

1789-1851.

Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show  
 He's as good as a lord ; well, let's grant that he's so.  
 If a person prefer that description of praise,  
 Why, a coronet's certainly cheaper than bays.  
 But he need take no pains to convince us he's not  
 (As his enemies say) the American Scott. . . . .  
 He has drawn you one character, though, that is new,  
 One wild flower he's pluck'd that is wet with the dew. . . . .  
 All his other men-figures are clothes upon sticks,  
 The *dernier chemise* of a man in a fix  
 (As a captain, besieged, when his garrison's small,  
 Sets up caps upon poles, to be seen o'er the wall).

Lowell.

Mr. Cooper describes things to the life, but he puts no motion into them. While he is insisting on the minutest details, and explaining all the accompaniments of an incident, the story stands still. The elaborate accumulation of particulars serves not to embody his imagery, but to distract and impede the mind. He is not so much the master of his materials as their drudge : he labours under an epilepsy of the fancy. He thinks himself bound in his character of novelist to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Thus, if two men are struggling on the edge of a precipice for life or death, he goes not merely into the vicissitudes of action and passion as the chances of the combat vary ; but stops to take an inventory of the geography of the place, the shape of the rock, the precise attitude and display of the limbs and muscles, with the eye and habits of a sculptor. Mr. Cooper does not seem to be aware of the infinite divisibility of mind and matter ; and that an "abridgment" is all that is possible or desirable in the most individual representation. A person who is so determined, may write volumes on a grain of sand or an insect's wing. Why describe the dress and appearance of an Indian chief, down to his tobacco-stopper and button-holes ? It is mistaking the province of the artist for that of the historian ; and it is this very obligation of painting and statuary to fill up all the details, that renders them incapable of telling a story, or of

expressing more than a single moment, group, or figure. Poetry or romance does not descend into the particulars, but atones for it by a more rapid march and an intuitive glance at the more striking results. By considering truth or matter-of-fact as the sole element of popular fiction, our author fails in massing and in impulse. In the midst of great vividness and fidelity of description, both of nature and manners, there is a sense of juveneness,—for half of what is described is insignificant and indifferent; there is a hard outline,—a little manner; and his most striking situations do not tell as they might and ought, from his seeming more anxious about the mode and circumstances than the catastrophe. In short, he anatomizes his subjects; and his characters bear the same relation to living beings that the botanic specimens collected in a portfolio do to the living plant or tree.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1829.

### Bryan Waller Procter.

1790.

To-day I finished a second reading of Barry Cornwall's poems. Scarcely any tether can bring my nose down to that rank herbage which is springing up about us in our walk of poetry. But how fresh and sweet is Barry Cornwall's!—he unites the best qualities of the richest moderns and the purest ancients.—*W. S. Landon*, 1836.

One of the kindest, gentlest, and most amiable of natures; a warm, true, and indefatigable friend; an excellent family man, and in all his relations guileless and simple as a child. His writings, principally in verse, and some charming prose sketches of his, likewise partake, for the most part, of the gentle spirit of the man, with much of playfulness and phantasy; but at times they rise into tragic force and graphic energy.—*Madden's "Memoirs of Lady Blessington."*

### Edward Irving.

1792–1834.

I have got acquainted with Mr. Irving, the Scotch preacher, whose fame must have reached you. He is a humble disciple at the feet of Gamaliel (Samuel) T(aylor) C(oleridge). Judge

how his own sectarists must stare when I tell you he has dedicated a work to S. T. C., acknowledging to have learnt more of the nature of Faith, Christianity, and Christian Church from him than from all the men he ever conversed with. He is a most sincere, amiable, modest man in a room, this Boanerges in the Temple. Mrs. Montagu told him the dedication would do him no good. "That shall be a reason for doing it," was his answer. Judge now whether this man be a quack. →

*Charles Lamb.*

Pringle: "Why, you have not left the Kirk for the Scarlet Lady, I hope, Mr. Campbell?" Campbell: "I have not yet publicly renounced it. I once was as orthodox as I ought to have been." Pringle: "You have not yet heard Irving; he will make a convert of you. Everybody, high and low, has heard him; all the town runs after him." Campbell: "So they will after any novelty, and get tired. It is strange any wise person should call such wild outbreaks of distempered brains religion. People do not want their passions inflamed now by religion to set them against oppressors; they want a more sober rational faith." Pringle: "Irving will tell us we must abandon reason altogether to become true believers." Campbell: "In other words abandon that which makes the only difference between human and animal existence—who made him so much wiser than our old Glasgow clerks, or than we are ourselves? it is but assumption. You did not leave Africa to become a disciple of this new apostle of Scotland?" Pringle: "But he is a wonderfully clever man." Campbell: "He is a novelty; he assumes new airs because the old are time-worn, and the multitude love religious change as well as anything else that shifts the scene." Pringle: "I grant he is a novelty in the pulpit in countenance and manner. He has no idea of the 'good old way,' and most people run after him as they would after a new show. He is a shrewd preacher, who well understands how to make an impression upon the minds of his hearers." Campbell: "It is half the effect of his look, the other half not the effect of sober preaching. People love abuse from the pulpit as well as elsewhere. He seems a divergence from Christianity towards some crude thing of which he has himself no specific idea—he plays monkey tricks and people catch at them." Pringle: "You have not heard him, Mr. Campbell, but he is very striking." Campbell: "Theatrical, I suppose?" Pringle: "I don't know that; he rivets the atten-

tion strongly by his personal appearance." Campbell: "Ay, dresses the character well, as the people say at the theatre." Pringle: "That we should call a profane comparison in Scotland." Campbell: "We are the wrong side the Tweed now, and have no fear of the Kirk-stool. How is his matter, his language? As to his denunciations, we might make them as glibly and with as good right as he." Pringle: "They seem good; his outbreaks produce their effect on the congregation." Campbell: "That they would do the more if they were more still out of the way of common pulpits. I have seen his book, it is all miserable affectation and commonplace nonsense, couched in the worst style."—*Redding's "Life of Thomas Campbell."*

I have read a few of his orations, and the third, if I mistake not, pleased me very much. But I could not proceed; the very bad taste, and those *ambitiosa ornamenta*, which Horace so justly reprobates, disgusted me exceedingly. The first charm of a preacher, in my opinion, is to possess his congregation with a conviction that he is thoroughly *in earnest*. The subjects in the pulpit are of too momentous a concern to be made the materials of oratorical flourishes; and whatever tends to show the teacher more intent upon displaying his own abilities than persuading or convincing his hearers, is not only bad taste, but a pitiful aberration from what ought to be his sole object.—*Hannah More.*

## Percy Bysshe Shelley.

1792–1822.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy. . . . Julian is rather serious.—*Shelley.*

The strong imagination of Shelley made him an idolater in his own despite. Out of the most indefinite terms of a hard, cold, dark, metaphysical system, he made a gorgeous Pantheon, full of beautiful, majestic, and life-like forms. He turned

atheism itself into a mythology, rich with visions as glorious as the gods that live in the marble of Phidias, or the virgin saints that smile on us from the canvas of Murillo. The Spirit of Beauty, the Principle of Good, the Principle of Evil, when he treated of them, ceased to be abstractions. They took shape and colour. They were no longer mere words, but "intelligible forms;" "fair humanities;" objects of love, of adoration, or of fear. As there can be no stronger sign of a mind destitute of the poetical faculty than that tendency which was so common among the writers of the French school to turn images into abstractions—Venus, for example, into Love, Minerva into Wisdom, Mars into War, Bacchus into Festivity—so there can be no stronger sign of a mind truly poetical than a disposition to reverse this abstracting process, and to make individuals out of generalities. Some of the metaphysical and ethical theories of Shelley were certainly most absurd and pernicious. But we doubt whether any modern poet has possessed in an equal degree **some** of the highest qualities of the great ancient masters. His poetry seems not to have been an art but an inspiration. Had he lived to the full age of man he might not improbably have given to the world some great work of the very highest rank in design and execution.—*Macaulay*

Shelley disdained common sense. Of his "Prince Athanase" we have no earthly comprehension, with his "Prometheus" we have no human sympathies, and the grander he becomes the less popular we find him.—*Lord Lytton*.

His fancy (and he had sufficient for a whole generation of poets) was the medium through which he saw all things, his facts as well as his theories; and not only the greater part of his poetry, but the political and philosophical speculations in which he indulged, were all distilled through the same over-refining and unrealizing alembic. . . . Though benevolent and generous to an extent that seemed to exclude all idea of selfishness, he yet scrupled not, in the pride of system, to disturb wantonly the faith of his fellow-men, and without substituting any equivalent good in its place, to rob the wretched of a hope which, even if false, would be worth all this world's best truths.—*Thomas Moore*.

Of this I am certain, that before his death the mind of that brilliant genius was rapidly changing—that for him the cross was gathering attractions around it—that the wall which he



complained had been built up between his heart and his intellect was being broken down, and that rays of a strange splendour were already streaming upon him through the interstices.—*Alexander Smith.*

I cannot help thinking of him as if he were alive as much as ever, so unearthly he appeared to me, and so seraphical a thing of the elements.—*Leigh Hunt.*

The *best* and least selfish man I ever knew.—*Byron.*

It was now, too, I was first invited to meet Shelley, and readily accepted the invitation. I went a little after the time, and seated myself at the place kept for me at the table, right opposite Shelley himself, as I was told after, for I did not then know what hectic, spare, weakly, yet intellectual looking creature it was carving a bit of brocoli or cabbage in his plate, as if it had been the substantial wing of a chicken. . . . and his wife, and her sister, Keats, Horace Smith, and myself made up the party. In a few moments, Shelley opened the conversation by saying, in the most feminine and gentle voice, "As to that detestable religion, the Christian. . . ."—*B. R. Haydon.*

He loved truth, and sought it everywhere, and at all hazards, frankly and boldly, like a man who deserved to find it; but he also dearly loved victory in debate, and warm debate, for its own sake. Never was there a more unexceptionable disputant. He was eager beyond the most ardent, but never angry, and never personal. He was the only arguer I ever knew who drew every argument from the nature of the thing, and who never could be provoked to descend to personal contentions.—*New Monthly Magazine*, 1833.

The errors of action, committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far only as he is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that were they judged impartially, his character would stand fairer and brighter than any of his contemporaries.—*Mrs. Shelley.*

He looked like an elegant and slender flower whose head drooped from being surcharged with rain. . . . His gestures were abrupt, sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate, and almost feminine, of the purest red and white, yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun. . . . His features, his whole head and face, were particularly small, yet

the last appeared of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers swiftly through his locks, unconsciously, so that it was singularly rough and wild—a particularity which he had at school. His features were not symmetrical, the mouth perhaps excepted, yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation—a fire—an enthusiasm—a vivid and preternatural intelligence that I never met with in any other countenance.—*Medwin's "Life of Shelley."*

His speculations were as wild as the experience of twenty years had shown them to be, but the zealous earnestness for the augmentation of knowledge, and the glowing philanthropy and boundless benevolence that marked them, are without parallel.—*James Hogg.*

Mr. Shelley was a remarkable man. His person was a type and shadow of his genius. His complexion, fair, golden, freckled, seemed transparent with an inward light, and his spirit within him

“ So divinely wrought  
That you might almost say his body thought.”

He reminded those who saw him of some of Ovid's fables. His form, graceful and slender, drooped like a flower in the breeze. But he was crushed beneath the weight of thought which he aspired to bear, and was withered in the lightning glare of a ruthless philosophy. He mistook the nature and faculty of his own feelings—the lowly children of the valley, by which the sky-lark makes its bed and the bee murmurs, for the proud cedar or the mountain-pine, in which the eagle builds its eyrie, and “dallies with the wind and scorns the sun.”—*Edinburgh Review*, 1824.

Shelley's figure was tall and almost unnaturally attenuated, so as to bend to the earth like a plant that had been deprived of its vital air ;<sup>1</sup> his features had an unnatural sharpness, and an unhealthy paleness, like a flower that has been kept from

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- The reader will observe the repetition of comparing Shelley to a flower. The resemblance to a flower he must have forcibly suggested ; for here are three critics, who assuredly were no imitators of each other, expressing their impressions by means of the same image.—ED.

the light of day ; his eyes had an almost superhuman brightness, and his voice a preternatural elevation of pitch and shrillness of tone ; all which peculiarities probably arose from some accidental circumstances connected with his early nurture and bringing up.—*P. G. Patmore, "My Friends and Acquaintances."*

NORTH : The worst dishonour done to his memory is the admiration in which his genius is held by feebles and fribbles, and coxcombs and cockneys. TICKLER : And prigs. SHEPHERD : And sumpsh. NORTH : Their imitations of their oracle—who did indeed often utter glorious responses from a cloudy shrine all at once, and not transiently illuminated from within by irrepressible native light—are better nonsense-verses than I ever knew written by men of wit for a wager. For unconscious folly in its own peculiar walk can far surpass the wildest extravagance of wit—perfect no-meaning can be perpetrated only by a natural numbskull, and is beyond the reach of art.—"*Noctes Ambrosianæ.*"

## Captain Marryat.

1792-1848.

He has a frank, dashing genius, and splashes about the water in grand style. He writes like a *man*, and that is more than most of the other novelists do, who have neither the vigour of one sex nor the refinement of the other.—*Lord Lytton.*

He may be said to have created a new kind of novel literature, illustrative of naval life.<sup>1</sup> And in that line, though followed and imitated by many, he has been equalled by none.—*Dr. Madden, "Life of Lady Blessington."*

Captain Marryat, as everybody knows, is sailor and novelist by profession. Both his old callings stand in the way of his new one.<sup>2</sup> He may be right in saying, "After all, there is nothing like being a captain !" Nevertheless, a life at sea is a sorry preparation for judging of life ashore. . . . A grave and philosophical subject we are sure he could never fathom. It is a pity that he should not rest content with the goodly

<sup>1</sup> Smollett was the creator.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> From a review of Marryat's "Diary in America."

heritage that nature has assigned to him. His lot was marked out by the original diversity of human talents, and its boundary has still been more strongly drawn by the division of intellectual labour which that diversity creates. It lies in a pleasant land. Smollett has made a sorry figure by continuing the history of England. Hume would have probably made no better had he yielded to the temptation of continuing "Roderick Random." In case the reflection is any comfort to him, let Captain Marryat picture to himself M. de Tocqueville engaged upon a second part of "Peter Simple."—*Edinburgh Review*, 1839.

If it were put upon me to define Captain Marryat as an author, and to mark him with an appropriate epithet, I should say that he is a pleasant writer. His leading excellence is the untiring nerve of his light, easy, and flowing pen, together with a keen sense of the ridiculous, which, while it rarely leads him into broad and unmeaning farce, effectually preserves him from taking a dull, sententious, or matter-of-fact view either of men or things. His productions seem to cost him so little that one thinks he might write on for a life uninterruptedly, "eating, drinking, and sleeping hours excepted," and so probably he will till the *canevas* is totally exhausted. That there is no trace of effort in anything he does is in itself a charm. But after all his great and peculiar excellence is his originality—that he is himself alone; and that as he borrows from nobody, so on the other hand nobody can safely borrow from him.—*T. Campbell, New Monthly Magazine*.

A captain in the navy, and an honour to it—an admirable sailor, and an admirable writer—and would that he, too, were with us on the leads, my lads, for a pleasanter fellow, to those who know him, never enlivened the social board. . . . He would have stood in the first-class of sea-scribes had he written nothing but "Peter Simple."—"Noctes Ambrosianæ."

### Mrs. Hemans.

1794–1835.

Without disparagement of the living, we scarcely hesitate to say that in Mrs. Hemans our female literature has lost perhaps its brightest ornament. To Joanna Baillie she might be inferior, not only in vigour of conception, but in the power of metaphy-

sically analyzing those sentiments and feelings, which constitute the bases of human action ; to Mrs. Jameson, in that critical perception which, from detached fragments of spoken thought, can discriminate the links which bind all into a distinctive character ; to Miss Landon, in eloquent facility ; to Caroline Bowles, in simple pathos ; and to Mary Mitford, in power of thought ; but as a female writer, influencing the female mind, she has undoubtedly stood, for some by-past years, the very first in the first rank ; and this pre-eminence has been acknowledged, not only in her own land, but wherever the English tongue is spoken, whether on the banks of the eastern Ganges, or the western Mississippi. Her path was her own ; and shoals of imitators have arisen alike at home, and on the other side of the Atlantic, who, destitute of her animating genius, have mimicked her themes, and parodied her sentiments and language, without being able to reach its height. In her poetry, religious truth and intellectual beauty meet together ; and assuredly it is not the less calculated to refine the taste and exalt the imagination, because it addresses itself almost exclusively to the better feelings of our nature alone. Over all her pictures of humanity are spread the glory and the grace reflected from purity of morals, delicacy of perception and conception, sublimity of religious faith, and warmth of patriotism ; and turning from the dark and degraded, whether in subject or sentiment, she seeks out those verdant oases in the desert of human life, on which the affections may most pleasantly rest.—*Fohn Wilson*, 1835

Egeria (Mrs. Hemans) was totally different from any other woman I had ever seen, either in Italy or England. She did not dazzle ; she subdued me. Other women might be more commanding, more versatile, more acute ; but I never saw one so exquisitely feminine. She was lovely without being beautiful ; her movements were features ; and if a blind man had been privileged to pass his hand over the silken length of hair that when unbraided flowed round her like a veil, he would have been justified in expecting softness and a love of softness, beauty and a perception of beauty, to be distinctive traits of her mind. Nor would he have been deceived. Her birth, her education, but above all, the genius with which she was gifted, combined to inspire a passion for the ethereal, the tender, the imaginative, the heroic—in one word, the beautiful. Her knowledge was extensive and various, but true to the first principle of her nature, it was poetry that she sought in history,

scenery, character, and religious belief—poetry that guided all her studies, governed all her thoughts, coloured all her conversation. . . . I might describe, but describe for ever, but I should never succeed in portraying Egeria : she was a muse, a grace, a variable child, a dependant woman—the Italy of human beings.—*Miss Fewsbury.*

That holy spirit,  
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep.—*Wordsworth.*

I cannot well conceive a more exquisitely beautiful creature than Mrs. Hemans was ; none of the portraits or busts I have ever seen do her justice ; nor is it possible for words to convey to the reader any idea of the matchless yet serene beauty of her expression. Her glossy, waving hair was parted on her forehead, and terminated on the sides in rich and luxuriant auburn curls. There was a dove-like look in her eyes, and yet a chastened sadness in their expression. Her complexion was remarkably clear, and her high forehead looked as pure and spotless as Parian marble. A calm repose, not unmingled with melancholy, was the characteristic expression of the face ; but when she smiled all traces of sorrow were lost, and she seemed to be “but a little lower than the angels.”—“*Pen and Ink Sketches.*”

Showed Shelley some poems to which I had subscribed, by Felicia Browne, whom I had met in North Wales, where she had been on a visit at the house of a connexion of mine. She was then sixteen, and it was impossible not to be struck with the beauty (for beautiful she was), the grace, and charming simplicity and *naïveté* of this interesting girl ; and on my return from Denbighshire I made her and her works frequent subjects of conversation with Shelley. Her juvenile productions, remarkable certainly for her age—and some of those which the volume contained were written when she was a mere child—made a powerful impression on Shelley, ever enthusiastic in his admiration of talent ; and with a prophetic spirit he foresaw the coming greatness of that genius which, under the name of Hemans, afterwards electrified the world.—*T. Medwin, “Life of Shelley.”*

Mrs. Hemans is somewhat too poetical for my taste—too many flowers, I mean, and too little fruit ; but that may be the cynical criticism of an elderly gentleman.—*Sir W. Scott.*

The slight bravura dash of the fair, tuneful Hemans.—*Carlyle.*

Her poetry is infinitely sweet, elegant, and tender—touching, perhaps, and contemplative, rather than vehement or overpowering; and not only finished throughout with exquisite delicacy, and even serenity of execution, but informed with a loftiness and purity of feeling, and a certain sober and humble tone of indulgence and piety, which must satisfy all judgments, and allay the apprehensions of those who are most afraid of the passionate exaggerations of poetry. The diction is always beautiful, harmonious, and free—and the themes, though of infinite variety, uniformly treated with a grace, originality, and judgment which mark the same master hand.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1829.

I have been thinking much lately of poor Mrs. Hemans, that sweet singer of Britain, now for ever silent. In the "Contemplation of a Girls' School at Evening Prayer" she clothes many fine and hallowed images in the rich melody of her own peculiar language, and is led on by her own perception and sad experience to anticipate that state of trial and suffering to which the better and the gentler sex seem predestined; looking forward from the serene purity of their evening devotions to the pains and cares that are the sad inheritance of even the most virtuous and excellent females, in the performance of many painful duties, and the disappointment of many tender and sanguine hopes. There is one line, dictated no doubt by her personal and peculiar feelings, which opens a volume of those evils, too deep, too delicate for exposure, for which earth affords no remedy—

"'Tis to make idols and to find them clay."

There is not a line in the English language more full of deep and sad meaning.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

## Dr. Maginn.

1794–1842.

On the few occasions of my having the pleasure of being in his society, his conversation was very lively and original—a singular mixture of classical erudition and *Irish fun*. There was a good deal of wit, and still more of drollery, and certainly no deficiency of what is called conviviality and animal spirits. I remember on one occasion having heard from some

common friend that ne seemed to be throwing away a great deal of talent on ephemeral productions, I took the liberty of advising him to direct his great powers to some more permanent objects, and he told me that he contemplated some serious work, I think on the Greek drama, but of this I am not quite sure. It might have been the *Greek orators*. I had a high opinion of his power to illustrate either.—*J. W. Croker*.

In 1841 his friend Fraser died, and an incident occurred at the funeral which is recorded as an instance of exception to Maginn's general character, to which sentiment and romance were quite foreign. The obsequies took place at Bunhill Fields, in the same graveyard which holds the remains of John Bunyan. As soon as the ceremony was over, the doctor said to the grave-digger, "Grave-digger, show me the tomb of John Bunyan." The grave-digger led the way, and was followed by Maginn, who appeared particularly thoughtful. As they approached the place, the doctor turned to the person who accompanied him, and tapping him on the shoulder, said quietly, "Tread lightly." Maginn bent over the grave for some time in melancholy mood, and seemed unconscious of any one's presence. The bright sunshine poured around him. At length he seemed moved, and turning away, exclaimed in deep and solemn tones, "Sleep on, thou prince of dreamers."—*Chambers*.

His talents were doubtless of a high order, and his scholarship and education infinitely superior to those of his friend Hook, for such he soon became ; but unfortunately he possessed the same excitable and erratic temperament, only exaggerated, Hibernized to a degree that rendered it somewhat unsafe to rely upon him in a matter demanding the prudence and punctuality to be observed in the conduct of a weekly paper.—*Barham*.

.... Dr. Maginn of Cork,—a man Blackwood says of singular talent and great learning ; indeed, some of the happiest things in the magazine have been from his pen.—*John Galt to Lady Blessington*.



offended you?" "It has done him good," replied Gifford; "he has had 25*l.* from Devonshire."—*B. R. Haydon*.<sup>1</sup>

Oh ! who so well could sing love's joys and pains ?  
He lived in melody, as if his veins  
Poured music ; from his lips came words of fire,  
The voice of Greece, the tones of Homer's lyre.

*E. Elliott.*

John Keats was one of those sweet and glorious spirits who descend like the angel messengers of old, to discharge some divine command, not to dwell here. Pure, ethereal, glowing with the fervency of inward life, the bodily vehicle appears assumed but for the occasion, and as a mist, as a shadow, is ready to dissolve the instant that occasion is served.—*W. Howitt.*

## Dr. Arnold.

1795-1842.

Dr. Arnold, it seems to me, was not quite saintly ; his greatness was cast in a mortal mould : he was a little severe, almost a little hard ; he was vehement, and somewhat oppugnant. Himself the most indefatigable of workers, I know not whether he could have understood or made allowance for a temperament that required more rest ; yet not to one man in twenty thousand is given his great faculty of labour,—by virtue of it

<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere in the "Memoirs," edited by T. Taylor, Haydon says of Keats : "He began life full of hopes—fiery, impetuous, ungovernable, expecting the world to fall at once beneath his powers. Poor fellow ! his genius had no sooner begun to bud, than hatred and malice spat their poison on its leaves, and, sensitive and young, it shrivelled beneath their effusions. Unable to bear the sneers of ignorance or the attacks of envy, not having strength of mind enough to buckle himself together like a porcupine, and present nothing but his prickles to his enemies, he began to despond, flew to dissipation as a relief, which, after a temporary elevation of spirits, plunged him into deeper despondency than ever. For six weeks he was scarcely sober, and to show what a man does to gratify his habits, when once they get the better of him, he once covered his tongue and throat as far as he could reach with cayenne pepper, in order to appreciate the 'delicious coldness of claret in all its glory'—his own expression."—*Ed.*

he seems to me the greatest of working men.—*Charlotte Brontë.*

Both his virtues, lofty as they were, and his talents, were of an eminently practical order; nor were his very peculiarities without their usefulness. If he had been a severer analyst than he was—a man of judgment, more free from the impulses of the affections—a man less solicitous about the polemics of his day—more patient in investigation, and less ready to grasp at obvious solutions of difficulties—in one word, less of a theorist, he might have been greater as a literary man; but he could scarcely have possessed, along with these faculties, his own distinctive excellence.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1843.

A most singular and striking change has come upon our public schools. . . . This change is undoubtedly part of a general improvement of our generation, in respect of piety and reverence; but I am sure that to Dr. Arnold's personal earnest simplicity of purpose, strength of character, power of influence and piety, which none who ever came near him could mistake or question, the carrying of this improvement into our schools is mainly attributable. He was the first.—*Dr. Moberly.*

'Twas his to teach,  
Day after day, from pulpit and from desk,  
That the most childish sin which man can do  
Is yet a sin which Jesus never did  
When Jesus was a child, and yet a sin  
For which, in lowly pain, He lived and died:  
That for the bravest sin that e'er was praised  
The King Eternal wore a crown of thorns.  
In him was Jesus crucified again;  
For every sin which he could not prevent  
Stuck in him like a nail; his heart bled for it,  
As it had been a foul sin of his own.  
Heavy his cross, and stoutly did he bear it,  
Even to the foot of holy Calvary;  
And if at last he sunk beneath the weight,  
There were not wanting souls whom he had taught  
The way to Paradise, that, in white robes,  
Throng'd to the gate to hail their shepherd home!

*Hartley Coleridge.*

When he came to Oxford he was a mere boy in appearance, as well as in age, but we saw in a very short time that he was

quite equal to take his part in the arguments of the Common Room. As he was equal, so he was ready to take part in our discussions ; he was fond of conversation on serious matters, and vehement in argument ; fearless, too, in advancing his opinions—which, to say the truth, often startled us a good deal ; but he was ingenuous and candid, and though the fearlessness with which, so young as he was, he advanced his opinions, might have seemed to betoken presumption, yet the good temper with which he bore retort or rebuke relieved him from that imputation ; he was bold and warm, because, as far as his knowledge went, he saw very clearly, and he was an ardent lover of truth—but I never saw in him even then a grain of vanity or conceit.—*Mr. Justice Coleridge.*

He held that the work of Christianity itself was not accomplished so long as social and political institutions were exempt from its influence—so long as the highest power of human society professed to act on other principles than those declared in the Gospel ; but whenever it should come to pass that the strongest earthly bond should be identical with the bond of Christian fellowship—that the highest earthly power should avowedly minister to the advancement of Christian holiness—that crimes should be regarded as sins—that Christianity should be the acknowledged basis of citizenship—that the region of national and political questions, war and peace, oaths and punishments, economy and education, so long considered by good and bad alike as worldly and profane, should be looked upon as the very sphere to which Christian principles are most applicable—then he felt that Christianity would at last have gained a position where it would cope, for the first time, front to front with the power of evil ; that the unfulfilled promises of the older prophecies, so long delayed, would have received their accomplishment, that the kingdoms of this world would have indeed become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.—*A. P. Stanley.*

## Thomas Carlyle.

1795.

With regard to Mr. Carlyle's style—we have heard much of its affectation. If it be true that he is an affected writer no one

can have any business to claim for him a place among the Pantagruelists; for affectation is itself a cant. But we believe that the case is not so. When a man's power of thinking transcends his power of language, a colouring of pedantry and quaintness will often attach itself to his writings, and if he has convinced himself that the common literary style of his countrymen is used as a vehicle for the concealment or inadequate expression of thought, he will be not unlikely to substitute for it the plain speaking of colloquial intercourse, though this should occasionally verge towards vulgarity. Hence *mannerism*; but we can by no means see that *mannerism* must necessarily be affectation. Some of our readers will perhaps be startled by the assertion we are about to make—that Mr. Carlyle's style is identical in its leading peculiarities with that of Bishop Andrewes.—*Quarterly Review*, 1847.

Hooded and wrapped about with that strange and antique garb, there walks a kingly, a most royal soul, even as the Emperor Charles walked amidst solemn cloisters under a monk's cowl—a monarch still in soul.—*Longfellow*, "*Outre Mer*."

There are persons mole blind to the soul's make and style,  
 Who insist on a likeness 'twixt him (Emerson) and Carlyle.  
 To compare him with Plato would be vastly fairer,  
 Carlyle's the more burly, but E. is the rarer.  
 He sees fewer objects, but clearer, truer,  
 If C.'s as original, E.'s more peculiar.  
 That he's more of a man you might say of the one,  
 Of the other he's more of an Emerson.  
 C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of limb—  
 E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and slim;  
 The one two-thirds Norseman, the other half Greek,  
 Where the one's most abounding, the other's to seek;  
 C.'s generals require to be seen in the mass;  
 E.'s specialities gain if enlarged by the glass.  
 C. gives Nature and God his own fits of the blues,  
 And rims common-sense things with mystical hues.  
 E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,  
 And looks calmly around him with sharp common sense.  
 C. shows you how every-day matters unite  
 With the dim transdiurnal recesses of night.  
 While E. in a plain preternatural way  
 Makes mysteries matters of mere every day.

C. draws all his characters quite *à la Fuseli*—  
 He don't sketch their bundles of muscles and thews illy,  
 But he paints with a brush so untamed and profuse,  
 They seem nothing but bundles of muscles and thews.

Lowell.

Carlyle is like pickles ; only a little of him can be tasted with any relish at a time.—*Dr. Mackay.*

The ingenious Tom Carlyle.—*James Hogg.*

Mr. Carlyle formerly wrote for the *Edinburgh Review*—a man of talents, though absurdly overpraised by some of his admirers. I believe, though I do not know, that he ceased to write, because the oddities of his diction, and his new words, compounded *à la Teutonique*, drew such strong remonstrances from Napier.—*Macaulay to L. Hunt.*

Although Mr. Carlyle first propounded his views of Hero-worship in a series of lectures, yet it is easy to discern from his studied (sometimes painfully studied) style of writing that he is not well adapted for an orator. We once heard him deliver a few sentiments at a public meeting ; but he spoke, and that was all. Though manifestly bursting with ideas, he could not give them vent. The words that came uppermost did not please him, and he waited for others. Although he did what the best orators have been defined to do—though he “thought upon his legs”—he did not think aloud, and the intervals between his silent thoughts and the expression of them, were too long and too frequent for the patience of a mixed auditory. Yet the few sentences he did utter were aphorisms full of wisdom.—*R. Chambers.*

We shall regard it as one of the most melancholy evidences of the decline of all pure and healthful literature, if the writings of Mr. Carlyle continue to have an enduring hold upon the popular mind.—*Church of England Quarterly Review.*

A man who, though no systematic philosopher, has probably done more to spiritualize philosophy in England, than any other modern writer.—*F. R. Morell.*

Of his style, on which so much has been said and written, we will say nothing, further than to remark that his mode of expression has become effectually interwoven with his manner of thought ; so that the faults of the latter are for the most part occasioned by the quaint, unusual forms in which the meaning is conveyed. Hence not unfrequently we meet in all Mr. Carlyle'

writings with long elaborate passages, full of the most vivid picture-writing, and characterized by vigour of imagination ; but, when examined, containing no novelty of thought. Old common-places, which are in the mouth of every one, thus are made to assume an appearance of originality, so as perhaps to deceive the writer himself, who certainly does not seem aware that a majority of his opinions on men and things are by no means in advance of the age, but are already the common property of a great number of the intellectual and intelligent of his countrymen.—*Anon.*

Thomas Carlyle I excuse—he is entitled to be crazy, being a man of genius. NORTH : And of virtue—as Cowper said of his brother, “ A man of morals and of manners too.” TICKLER : But, oh, sir ! the impudent stupidity of some of the subscribers to that Signet Seal ! NORTH : Hopeless of achieving mediocrity in any of the humbler walks of their native literature, the creatures expect to acquire character by acquaintance with the drivel of German dotage, and, going at once to the fountain head, gabble about Goethe, “ The Master ! ” Yes, and I beseech you, Hal, look at the flunkies !—“ *Noctes Ambrosianæ.* ”

## Hartley Coleridge.

1796–1849.

Nature will either end thee quite ;  
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,  
Preserve for thee, by individual right,  
A young lamb's heart, among the full-grown flocks.  
What hast thou to do with sorrow,  
Or the injuries of to-morrow ?  
Thou art a dewdrop which the morn brings forth,  
Ill-fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,  
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth :  
A gem that glitters whilst it lives,  
And no forewarning gives ;  
But at the touch of wrong, without a strife,  
Slips in a moment out of life.—*Wordsworth*, 1802.

It was so, rather than by a regular course of study, that he was educated—by desultory reading, by the living voice of Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth, Lloyd, Wilson, and De Quincey ; and again by homely familiarity with town's folk and

country folk of every degree ; lastly, by daily recurring hours of solitude—by lonely wanderings with the murmur of the Brathay in his ear.—*Derwent Coleridge.*

How far, it may be asked, did the circumstances of Hartley Coleridge's life interfere with the largest exercise of his poetic powers? Their influence, we should say, must have been adverse, so far as they deprived him of that masculine invigoration which is often produced by the friendly oppugnancy of pursuits, independent of inclination. He would have doubtless been a greater poet if he had been less exclusively a poet ; for the stronger and therefore the loftier the stem, the higher will its blossom and fruitage wave in the air. It is obvious, however, that avocations so utterly at variance with his whole nature as the management of a school must have tended rather to paralyze than to discipline his powers. Literary success might have stimulated his mind to more of continuous exertion ; yet on this subject no general rule can be laid down. . . . So large a bequest as he has left us is seldom so unalloyed a one. A noble moral spirit will long continue to be diffused from his poetry ; a moral lesson not less deep is to be found in that poetry taken in connexion with his life.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1851.

## William Cullen Bryant.

1797.

It is indeed in the beautiful that the genius of Bryant finds its prime delight. He ensouls all dead insensate things in that deep and delicate sense of their seeming life, in which they breathe and smile before the eyes "that love all they look upon," and thus there is animation and enjoyment in the heart of the solitude.—*Professor Wilson.*

Bryant's writings transport us into the depths of the solemn primeval forest, to the shores of the lonely lakes—the banks of the wild nameless stream, or the brow of the rocky upland, rising like a promontory from amidst a wide ocean of foliage ; while they shed around us the glory of a climate, fierce in its extremes, but splendid in its vicissitudes.—*Washington Irving.*

## Thomas Hood.

1798-1845.

Stranger, if to thee

His claim to memory be obscure,  
 If thou wouldst learn how truly great was he,  
 Go, ask it of the poor.—*J. R. Lowell.*

Young in years, not in power. Our new Ovid!—only more imaginative!—painter to the visible eye—and the inward; commixture of what the superficial deem incongruous elements. Instructive living proof how close lie the founts of laughter and tears! Thou fermenting brain, oppressed as yet by its own riches! Though melancholy would seem to have touched thy heart with her painful, salutary hand, yet is thy fancy mercurial, undepressed, and sparkles and crackles more from the contact—as the northern lights when they near the frozen pole.—*Wainwright.*

Of gentle heart and open hand. Foe to none but the bigot, the pedant, and the quack. Friend to the suffering, the careworn, and the needy; to the victims of a cruel greed, to all that are desolate and oppressed—Hood, the generous, kind, and true.—*Anon., quoted by T. Hood, Jun.*

In the art of punning, whatever be its merits or demerits, Hood had few rivals, and but one superior, if, indeed, one—Mr. Thomas Hood.—*Barham.*

In looking to the character of Mr. Hood's mind we are immediately struck with the variety which it displays. We do not at the present day require to be told that there is no incompatibility between wit and pathos, or that sensibility and humour may dwell together in the same heart, for we have been rendered familiar with such associations in the character of our greatest writers. But in Hood this alliance is more than usually conspicuous. He is open to all influences, and yields himself with equal pliancy to all. He can call up the most grotesque conceptions—the most incongruous and ludicrous imagery; whole trains of comic and mirth-inspiring fancies wait upon his will without an effort, but he seems to find himself as much at home in the contemplation of serious human emotion—in listening to, or echoing back, some old and moving story of love and pity—or letting his thoughts wander with devout



gratitude over the beauties of creation, or in sympathy with the fading glories of old traditions.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1846.

Hood's words don't *act*. He sets out on a pilgrimage in pursuit of puns. He is an inquisitor upon the King's English, and has tortured every word in the language till it confessed a double meaning. His drollery is addressed to the eye rather than to the ear. He is pleasant in print. Peake is a punster to hear, Hood to read.—*C. Mathews*, "*Records of a Stage Veteran*."

He is the finest English poet between the generation of Shelley and the generation of Tennyson.—*W. M. Rossetti*.

If Hood does not rank in the first class among recent English poets, after Wordsworth and Keats, in virtue of these poems of metrical narrative and sensuous fancy, he attains a greater height, and strikes with a stronger emphasis, in another class of serious poems—those which consist in the vivid imagination, and abrupt lyric representation, of ghastly situations in physical nature and in human life. His "Dream of Eugene Aram," his "Haunted House," his "Forge," and his "Last Man," are well-known examples. There was, indeed, in Hood's genius a certain fascination for the ghastly, a certain familiarity of the fancy with ideas and objects usually kept out of mind as too horrible and too disagreeable. Toying with his pencil, he would sketch skulls, or coffins, or grinning skeletons, in antic mimicry of the attitudes of life. One of the most painful of the illustrations which accompany these Memorials is a sketch of himself lying in his shroud as a corpse, which he made while in bed during his last illness. Something of this fascination for the ghastly, this tendency to imagine horrible objects and situations, runs through Hood's comic writings, sometimes appearing distinctly, but in other places only obliging humour and frolic by a kind of reaction. "The hyena," he says himself, "is notoriously a frequenter of graves, a prowler among tombs; he is also the only beast that laughs, at least above his breath." Omitting the moral dislike-implied in the image chosen, Hood meant its intellectual import to be taken. From thoughts of death and graveclothes, of murders, of suicides, of gibbets on solitary moors, of suggestions of the fiend in gloomy rooms to men on the verge of madness—from a dark circumference of such thoughts, conceived with an almost reckless literality, we see the Humorist rebounding into the thick and bustle of ordinary social life, rioting in its infinite

provocations to mirth, raising smiles and laughter wherever he goes, and turning speech into a crackle of jest.—*David Masson.*

## Lord Macaulay.

1800–1859.

My confession of faith is very simple and explicit, and is at the service of anybody who asks for it. I do not agree with the High Churchmen in thinking that the State is always bound to teach religious faith to the people. I do not agree with the Voluntaries in thinking that it is always wrong in a State to support a religious establishment. I think the question a question of expediency, to be decided on a comparison of good and evil effects. I do not think it necessary to inquire whether, if there were no established kirk in Scotland, it would be fit to set one up. I find a kirk established. I am not prepared to pull it down: I will leave it what it has, but I will arm it with no new powers. I will impose no new burdens on the people for its support. I will make no distinction as to civil matters between the Churchman and the Dissenter. There are some questions which relate purely to the internal constitution of the church. Those questions ought, in my opinion, to be decided with a view to the efficiency and respectability of the church.—*Macaulay.*

I never, directly or indirectly, solicited the honour which has been conferred on me. The letter in which Palmerston informed me he had received the Queen's permission to offer me a peerage took me altogether by surprise.—*Ibid.*

It is impossible not to entertain a high respect for Mr. Macaulay's talents, but their display has on many occasions been attended with evidences of a want of what we will venture to call logical honesty. A certain trickiness pervades his reasonings. His favourite mode of argument is to lay down some acknowledged truism—surrounding it with a profusion of illustrations and a copious variety of research, under which he insinuates fallacies unworthy of a schoolboy. He takes commonplace for his premises, and paradox for his conclusions; and the richness of a fertile memory conceals the meagreness of a most defective logic.—*Examiner.*

The Macaulay-flowers of literature.—*O. W. Holmes.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Russell Lowell has well described Holmes, the greatest wit that America has yet produced, and a poet inferior to none, in a single distich:—

Posterity is not likely to deal leniently with the works of Lord Macaulay. It has already made him a classic; and has already inflicted the penalties which writers, whose compositions are made classic, have to endure. Specimens of his style are dictated as tests of orthography in our schools and the Civil Service; and works which might invite the youthful reader, by the delicacy of their diction and the interest of their narrative, are rendered disgusting as obstacles in the way of preferment.—*Anon.*

The prose of Mr. Macaulay is the prose of the rhetorician, and his poetry differs only from his prose in being more condensed and more decorated.—*Church of England Q. Review.*

Give Lord Macaulay a hint, a fancy, an insulated fact or phrase, a scrap of a journal or the tag end of a song, and on it, by the abused prerogative of genius, he would construct a theory of national or personal character, which should confer undying glory, or inflict indelible disgrace.—*A. Hayward.*

A man of world-wide renown—the spirited poet, the splendid orator, the brilliant historian, the delightful essayist—in a word, Thomas Babington Macaulay, now, I suppose, incontestibly our greatest living writer.—*M. R. Mitford.*

I always prophesied his greatness from the first moment I saw him, then a very young and unknown man, on the Northern Circuit. There are no limits to his knowledge, on small subjects as well as great; he is like a book in breeches. . . . I believe Macaulay to be incorruptible. You might lay ribbons, stars, garters, wealth, titles, before him in vain. He has an honest, genuine love for his country, and the world could not bribe him to neglect her interests.—*Sydney Smith.*

Mr. Macaulay has some qualities which might render sophistry too popular, and error too attractive. He has a singular felicity of style; and as he moves along his path of narrative, spreads a halo around him which beguiles the distance and dazzles his companions. It is a style undoubtedly which might often provoke criticism, so far as artistic rules are concerned; sometimes elaborated to excess, sometimes too familiar; with sentences too curiously balanced, and unnecessary antitheses to express very simple propositions. But with all this, and much more of the same kind that might be

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“A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit  
The electrical tingles of hit after hit.”—*ED.*

said, the fascination remains. The tale, as we proceed, flows on faster and faster. Page after page vanishes under the entranced eye of the reader; and whether we will or no, we are forced to follow as he leads—so light, and gay, and agreeable does the pathway appear. Even on the most beaten ground his power of picturesque description brings out lights and shadows—views alike of distances and roadside flowers—never seen or remarked or recollected before.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1849.

There was a remarkable harmony in the mind and purposes of Lord Macaulay. As statesman, critic, poet, historian, he exhibited the same character; he was working for the same ends. He could estimate with great sagacity, and state with exquisite clearness and force, what those changes in the government of the country are which the popular feeling demands, and which cannot be denied. He could joyfully acknowledge the value of reforms which the toils and the unpopularity of previous thinkers and doers had made inevitable. He could give us the most satisfactory arguments for believing that our time was better and happier than any that had preceded it. He could convince us to our great comfort, as no one else could, what sound standards for measuring events and characters we have attained. He could imitate in stirring and admirable verses those songs which had expressed the beliefs and feelings of a previous generation.<sup>1</sup>—*Rev. F. D. Maurice*.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1814 Hannah More wrote a letter to Zachary Macaulay about his son, Thomas Babington. The boy was then fourteen. "The quantity of reading," she says, "that Tom has poured in, and the quantity of writing he has poured out, is astonishing. It is in vain I have tried to make him subscribe to Sir Harry Savile's notion, that the poets are the best writers next to those who write prose. We have poetry for breakfast, dinner, and supper. I sometimes fancy," she goes on, "I observe a daily progress in the growth of his mental powers. His fine promise of mind expands more and more; and what is extraordinary, he has as much accuracy in his expression as spirit and vivacity in his imagination. I like, too, that he takes a lively interest in all passing events, and that the *child* is still preserved; I like to see him as boyish as he is studious, and that he is as much amused with making a pat of butter as a poem. . . . He has very quick perceptions of the beautiful and the defective in composition. . . . The other day, talking of what were the symptoms of a gentleman, he said, with some humour, and much good humour, that he had certain infallible marks of one, which were neatness, love of cleanliness and delicacy in his person."

Mr. Macaulay possesses great talents and extraordinary acquirements. He unites powers and has achieved successes not only various, but different in their character, and seldom indeed conjoined in one individual. He was, while in Parliament, though not quite an orator, and still less a debater, the most brilliant rhetorician of the House. His Roman ballads exhibit a novel idea worked out with a rare felicity, so as to combine the spirit of the ancient minstrels with the regularity of construction and sweetness of versification which modern taste requires; and his critical Essays exhibit a wide variety of knowledge with a great fertility of illustration, and enough of the salt of pleasantry and sarcasm to flavour and, in some degree, disguise a somewhat declamatory and pretentious dogmatism. It may seem too epigrammatic, but it is, in our serious judgment, strictly true to say that his History seems to be a kind of combination and exaggeration of the peculiarities of all his former efforts.—*Quarterly Review*, 1849.

### Letitia Elizabeth Landon.

1802-1838.

She was at this time from eighteen to twenty-two or three, a comely girl, with a blooming complexion, small, with very beautiful deep grey eyes, with dark eyelashes; her hair, never very thick, was of deep brown, and fine as silk; her forehead and eyebrows were perfect; the one white and clear, the other arched and well-defined. She was inclined rather to be fat—too healthy looking; and then her other features were defective; her nose was *retroussé*. Her mouth, however, without being particularly good, was expressive and proportioned to her small and delicate face. Her hands and feet were perfect; and in time her figure, which had a girlish redundancy of form in it, became slighter, and ended by being neat and easy, if not strictly graceful. She had a charming voice; and one could not but wonder that with that, and with so much soul, she did not sing—as a sort of necessity of her nature. Few persons have had their songs set so often to music; and few persons wrote songs so adapted to society, and to the graceful performance of amateurs, as she did. Her “I know not when I loved thee first,” and her “Constance,” have been set by clever composers,

and are deservedly popular. Her verses have always been liked by composers.<sup>1</sup>—*Grace Wharton.*

None of the laborious tribe of authors ever toiled more incessantly or more cheerfully than Miss Landon—none with a more devotedly generous spirit. She had the proud satisfaction of contributing to the support of her family, and to the last minute of her life this great object was uppermost in her mind. . . . It has been said that the same generous and disinterested spirit actuated her in her literary character; and that in the many opportunities which she possessed of giving an opinion from the press on the works of contemporaries, she displayed not only a fair, but a magnanimous disposition. I regret to say that from documents—manuscripts of her own—which chanced to fall into my hands, I cannot by any means fully subscribe to this opinion. But no mortal is perfect; and let these exceptions to the generally amiable spirit of a high-hearted and gifted woman sleep with her in the grave.—*W. Howitt.*

Her easy carriage and careless movements would seem to imply an insensibility to the feminine passion of dress; yet she had a proper sense of it, and never disdained the foreign aid of ornament, always provided it was simple, quiet, and becoming. Her hair was darkly brown, very soft and beautiful, and always tastefully arranged; her figure slight, but well-formed and graceful; her feet small, but her hands especially so, and faultlessly white and finely shaped; her fingers were fairy fingers; her ears also were observably little. Her face, though not regular in any feature, became beautiful by expression; every flash of thought, every change and colour of feeling, lightened over it as she spoke, when she spoke earnestly. The forehead was not high, but broad and full; the eyes had no overpowering brilliancy, but their clear intellectual light penetrated by its exquisite softness; her mouth was not less marked by character; and besides the glorious faculty of uttering the pearls and diamonds of fancy and wit, knew how to express scorn, or anger, or pride, as well as it knew how to smile winningly, or to pour forth those quick, ringing laughs which, not even excepting her *bons-mots* and aphorisms, were the most delightful things that issued from it.—*Laman Blanchard.*

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<sup>1</sup> Which, to judge from the sort of poetry that has usually received the preference of composers, will be hardly esteemed a compliment.—ED.

The popularity of Miss Landon suffered no abatement by the frequency of her appearance before the public. It appeared rather to augment than decline in the latest year of her literary career in London. And this is the more surprising as no extensive poem approaching to an epic character, nor detached pieces of hers of any sort of considerable length, have appeared. Still she had the power of seizing hold of the public esteem; an affectionate interest was felt in her; her very name inspired kindly feelings and expectations of meeting amiable sentiments associated with beautiful imagery in her productions.—*Dr. Madden.*

Sappho of a polish'd age,  
Loves and graces sweetly sing,  
Chasten'd splendours o'er thy page,  
Like moonlight on a fairy's wing.  
Feelings soft as morning's dews,  
Breathings gentle as the May's,  
Verses soft as violet's hues  
Once sported in thy happy days.

*F. S. Heraud.*

Spring shall return to that beloved shore,  
With health of leaves, and buds, and wild wood songs,  
But hers, the sweetest, with its tearful lore,  
Its womanly fond gushes come no more,  
Breathing the cadenced poetry that throngs  
To pure and fervid lips unstained by cares and wrongs.

*W. S. Landor.*

L. E. L. has too little variety for me; everything is so impassioned; I wish she would mix a little sage with her myrtle garland.—*Mrs. Grant's "Letters."*

There is a *passionate purity* in all her feelings that endears to me both her human and her poetical character. She is a true enthusiast. Her affections overflow the imagery her fancy lavishes on all the subjects of her song, and colour it all with a rich and tender light, which makes even confusion beautiful, gives a glowing charm even to indistinct conception, and when the thoughts themselves are full formed and substantial, which they often are, brings them prominently out upon the eye of the soul in flashes that startle us into sudden admiration. The originality of her genius methinks is conspicuous in the choice of its subjects—they are unborrowed; and in her least

successful poems—as wholes—there is no dearth of poetry.—  
*Wilson, “Noctes Ambrosianæ.”*

## Harriet Martineau.

1802.

She is a great and good woman ; of course not without peculiarities, but I have seen none as yet that annoy me. She is both hard and warm-hearted, abrupt and affectionate, liberal and despotic. I believe she is not at all conscious of her own absolutism. When I tell her of it she denies the charge warmly, then I laugh at her. I believe she almost rules Ambleside. Some of the gentry dislike her ; but the lower orders have a great regard for her.—*Charlotte Brontë.*

Woman : “ And we have got another writer-lady down at Ambleside.” Howitt : “ A poet ? ” Woman : “ Nay, nothing of the sort ; another guess sort of person, I can tell you.” Howitt : “ Why, who is that ? ” Woman : “ Who is that ? why, Miss Martineau, they call her. They tell me she wrote up the Reform Bill for Lord Brougham : and that she’s come from the Lambtons here ; and that she’s writing now about the taxes. Can she stop the steam, eh ? can she, think you ? Nay, nay, I warrant, big and strong as she is. Ha ! ha ! good lauk ! as I met her the other day walking along the muddy road below here—Is it a woman or a man, or what sort of an animal is it ? said I to myself. There she came, stride, stride—great heavy shoes, stout leather leggings on, and a knapsack on her back ! Ha ! ha ! that’s a *political comicalist*, they say ; what’s that ? Do they mean that they can stop steam ? But I said to my husband : Goodness, but that *would* have been a wife for you ! Why, she’d ha’ ploughed ! and they say she mows her own grass, and digs her own cabbages and potatoes ! ” —  
*Howitt’s “Homes and Haunts of the Poets.”*

## Ralph Waldo Emerson.

1803.

Emerson has a distinct smack of the rich and sunny west ; just as the honey in Madeira tastes of violets.—*James Hannay.*

Emerson’s writing has a cold cheerless glitter, like the new



furniture in a warehouse which will come of use by-and-bye.—  
*Alexander Smith.*

His is, we may say,  
A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders, whose range  
Has Olympus for one pole, for t'other th' Exchange.  
'Tis refreshing to old-fashioned people like me  
To meet such a primitive pagan as he,  
In whose mind all creation is duly respected  
As parts of himself—just a little projected.—*Lowell.*

A writer distinguished for his genius, cultivated mind, and elegant diction. He can hardly be ranked as a systematic philosopher, but belongs more correctly to the class of philosophical essayists, such as Montaigne. His metaphysical views, as expressed in the "Essay on the *Over-soul*," seem strongly coloured with idealistic Pantheism.—*J. R. Morell.*

## Nathaniel Hawthorne.

1804-1864.

When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted,  
For making so full a sized man as she wanted,  
So to fill out her model a little she spared  
From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared,  
And she could not have hit a more excellent plan  
For making him fully and perfectly man.—*Lowell.*

Mr. Hawthorne's personality is peculiar, and specially peculiar in a country like America. He is quiet, fanciful, quaint, and his humour is shaded by a certain meditateness of spirit. Although a Yankee, he partakes of none of the characteristics of a Yankee. His thinking and his style have an antique air. His roots strike down through the visible mould of the present, and draw sustenance from the generations under ground. The ghosts that haunt the chamber of his mind are the ghosts of dead men and women. He has a strong smack of the Puritan; he wears around him, in the New England town, something of the darkness and mystery of the aboriginal forest.—*A. Smith.*

I was extremely gratified with the sight of Mr. Hawthorne, his "*Scarlet Letter*" having given me a desire to know a man so

full of thought and feeling and fine purpose. His few words do not hinder his countenance from being one of the most speaking I ever met with.—*Leigh Hunt*.

## Benjamin Disraeli.

1805.

In his manners Disraeli the younger is quite his own character of "Vivian Grey," full of genius and eloquence, with extreme good nature, and a perfect frankness of character.—*Lady Blessington*.

Disraeli has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. He is lividly pale, and, but for the energy of his actions and the strength of his lungs, would seem a victim to consumption. His eye is black as Erebus, and has the most mocking and lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. . . . His hair is as extraordinary as his taste in waistcoats. A thick, heavy mass of jet black ringlets falls over his left cheek almost to his collarless coat; while on the right it is parted and put away with the smooth carefulness of a girl's, and shines most unctuously

"With thy incomparable oil, Macassar!"

Disraeli was the only one at table who knew Beckford, and the style in which he gave a sketch of his habits and manners was worthy of himself. I might as well attempt to gather up the foam of the sea as to convey an idea of the extraordinary language in which he clothed his description. There were at least five words in every sentence that must have been very much astonished at the use they were put to, and yet no others, apparently, could so well have conveyed his idea. He talked like a racehorse approaching the winning-post, every muscle in action, and the utmost energy of expression flung out in every burst. . . . No mystic priest of the corybantes could have worked himself up into a finer frenzy of language.—*N. P. Willis*.

We doubt whether, even with all proper appliances, Mr. Disraeli could produce a really good work of fiction. He seems to us to want some of the most essential elements of a great novelist. The calm, the natural, the simply grand, are not his field; the startling and improbable, both in character and incident, have a dangerous charm for him; he moves

forward, not with steady progression, but in hurried bursts, with strange, impassioned movements; he does not possess, but is possessed by, his imagination; excited himself, he involves the reader in the same atmosphere of turbulence—hurries him forward without repose, and leaves him often at the end of some of his most striking scenes with the feeling of exhaustion. There is also a want of directness and reality about his passion: if he feels strongly, he has not the power of communicating a corresponding feeling to his readers; we perceive rather the reflection or shadow of feeling than the thing itself, and even after his most laboured passages, can at the utmost go no farther than Othello's exclamation, "O, well-painted passion!"—*Edinburgh Review*, 1837.

I am so pleased to see his progress in the House, *which I alone predicted the night of his first failure.*<sup>1</sup>—*Lord Lytton to Lady Blessington.*

Many years ago (upwards of twenty) I frequently met Mr. Disraeli at Lady Blessington's, in Seamore Place. It required no ghost from the grave, or rapping spirit from the invisible world, to predicate, even then, the success of the young Disraeli in public life. Though in general society he was habitually silent and reserved, he was closely observant. It required generally a subject of more than common interest to produce the fitting degree of enthusiasm to animate him and to stimulate him into the exercise of his marvellous powers of conversation. When duly excited, however, his command of language was truly wonderful, his power of sarcasm unsurpassed; the readiness of his wit, the quickness of his perception, the grasp of mind that enabled him to seize on all the parts of any subject under discussion, those only would venture to call in question who had never been in his company at the period I refer to.—*Dr. Madden*, 1855.

Like Sir Robert Peel he appears to isolate himself—to have no associates in the House, except those forced upon him by the immediate necessities of party. This isolation and self-absorption are equally conspicuous whether he is quiescent or in activity. Observe him anywhere about the House, in the lobbies or in the committee-rooms, you never see him in confidential communication with any one.—*Francis*, 1852.

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<sup>1</sup> The italics are Lord Lytton's.—ED.

He is entirely original. We are never reminded of any one else; we never half close the book, saying, "Surely we have read this before." No, we are startled, surprised, and always carried on to the last. In any other age than the present, or even now, Mr. Disraeli would have been a poet. He has essentially the poetic temperament, the intense self-consciousness, the impetuosity, and the eye for the beautiful.—*Theodore Hook*, 1837.

## Lord Lytton.

1806.

At the head of British novelists or thereabouts most persons would place the ex-member for Lincoln—a gentleman who received a baronetcy from the same hands which presented Robert Owen to the Queen. We plead guilty to having read several of this gentleman's works, which seem expressly written to show that a man may commit crimes of the deepest dye without being a whit the less amiable, high-minded, or even virtuous. . . . We do not know what were the services for which Sir E. L. Bulwer was made a baronet, unless it was for writing these novels. The fact that such writing should be a path to political influence and social distinction is not the least among the symptoms of that evil which we wish to expose.—*"Times."*

You bandbox!—*Tennyson*.

Mr. Bulwer's earlier works made their appearance during the height of the epidemic of fashionable novel-writing—a brief, but remarkable phasis in our literary history. In France, where society, broken up by the Revolution and the subsequent changes, has never fully resumed its former distinctions, and where the passive aristocracy of rank is on all hands crossed and amalgamated with the more active aristocracy of talent, the life of the upper, as separate or distinct from that of the middle class of society, presents no peculiarities sufficiently marked for the purposes of the novelist. But in England, where each class stands out in strong relief upon the map of society; where long usage has stamped them with peculiar modes and habits, both of thought and action; and where, at the same time, the separation has never been so absolute or exclusive but that talent and enterprise may make their way

from the lowest into the highest sphere ; there naturally existed a sufficiently strong and general interest in the manners, sayings, and doings of the higher ranks, to afford promise of grateful notice to any one who could present the public, from personal observation, with some sketches of the *El Dorado* of fashion—of that attractive region into which so many of the middle classes are always struggling or hoping at some time or other to enter. It was no wonder then, that some of our novelists should seek for the materials of fiction in this inviting field ; or that the first apocalypses from the upper world should have been received with such curiosity and deference. The very air of exclusion which characterized the views of society exhibited by this class of writers, had in it something exciting. All their novels seemed written to illustrate the moral lesson of Touchstone to the Shepherd : “ Shepherd, wert ever at Court ? ” “ No. ” “ Then thou art damned. ” The public at first received the oracle with all humility. At most they ventured, like the Shepherd, to utter a “ Nay, I hope ; ” and then applied themselves assiduously to the perusal of these revelations from this high quarter, to see if peradventure their doom might be averted.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1832.

Towards twelve o'clock Mr. Lytton Bulwer was announced, and enters the author of “ Pelham. ” I had made up my mind how he *should* look, and between prints and descriptions thought I could scarcely be mistaken in my idea of his person. No two things could be more unlike, however, than the ideal of Mr. Bulwer in my mind, and the real Mr. Bulwer who followed the announcement. I liked his manners extremely. He ran up to Lady Blessington, with the joyous heartiness of a boy let out of school ; and the “ How d’ye, Bulwer ? ” went round as he shook hands with everybody in the style of welcome usually given to “ the best fellow in the world. ” . . . Bulwer’s head is phrenologically a fine one. His forehead retreats very much, but is very broad and well-marked, and the whole air is that of decided mental superiority. His nose is aquiline. His complexion is fair, his hair profuse, curly, and of light auburn. A more good-natured, habitually smiling expression could hardly be imagined. . . . I can imagine no style of conversation calculated to be more agreeable than Bulwer’s. Gay, quick, various, half-satirical, and always fresh and different from everybody else. . . . Bulwer’s voice, like his brother’s, is exceedingly lover-like and sweet.—*N. P. Willis*.

He is envied and abused,—for nothing, I believe, except for the superiority of his genius, and the brilliant literary success it commands; and knowing this, he chooses to assume a pride which is only the armour of a sensitive mind afraid of a wound. He is to his friends the most frank and noble creature in the world, and open to boyishness with those whom he thinks understand and value him.—*Lady Blessington.*

Bulwer worked his way to eminence—worked it through failure, through ridicule. His facility is only the result of practice and study. He wrote at first very slowly and with great difficulty; but he resolved to master the stubborn instrument of thought, and mastered it. He has practised writing as an art, and has re-written some of his essays unpublished, nine or ten times over. Another habit will show the advantage of continuous application. He only writes about three hours a day, from ten in the morning till one—seldom later. The evenings, when alone, are devoted to reading, scarcely ever to writing. . . . He writes very rapidly, averaging twenty pages a day of novel print.—*Bentley's Miscellany.*

One of the most characteristic features of Bulwer's writings is the singular combination of worldly experience—a perfect knowledge of life, and especially of life in the upper circles of society, a thorough acquaintance with its selfishness and specious fallacies—with the vast amount of prose poetry that prevails in his prose writings.—*Dr. Madden.*

His poetry spoils his prose; and his prose spoils his poetry.—*Anon.*

## Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

1807.

A man of true genius.—*Edgar A. Poe.*

Longfellow, in the "Golden Legend," has entered more closely into the temper of the monk, for good and for evil, than ever yet theological writer or historian, though they may have given their life's labour to the analysis.—*Ruskin.*

A man's heart beats in his every line.—*George Gilfillan.*

Of all our poets, Longfellow best deserves the title of artist. He has studied the principles of verbal melody, and rendered himself master of the mysterious affinities which exist between sound and sense, word and thought, feeling and expression.

This tact in the use of language is probably the chief cause of his success.—*Griswold.*

Our hemisphere cannot claim the honour of having brought him forth ; but still he belongs to us, for his works have become as household words wherever the language is spoken. And whether we are charmed by his imagery, or soothed by his melodious versification, or elevated in the high moral teachings of his pure muse, or follow with sympathetic hearts the wanderings of *Evangeline*, I am sure that all who hear my voice will join with me in the tribute I desire to pay to the genius of Longfellow.—*Cardinal Wiseman.*

### Nathaniel Parker Willis.

1807—1867.

Mr. Willis was an extremely agreeable young man (1855) in society, somewhat over-dressed and a little *démonstratif*, but abounding in good spirits, pleasing reminiscences of Eastern and Continental travelling, and of his residence there for some time as *attaché* to a foreign legation. He was observant and communicative, lively and clever in conversation, having the peculiar art of making himself agreeable to ladies, old as well as young ; *dégagée* in his manner, and on exceedingly good terms with himself and with the *élite* of the best society wherever he went.—*Dr. Madden.*

There is Willis, so natty, and jaunty, and gay,  
Who says his best things in so foppish a way,  
With conceits and pet phrases so thickly o'erlaying 'em,  
That one hardly knows whether to thank him for saying 'em.  
Over ornament ruins both poetry and prose—  
Just conceive of a Muse with a ring in her nose !  
His prose had a natural grace of its own,  
And enough of it too, if he'd let it alone ;  
But he twitches and jerks so, one fairly gets tired,  
And is forced to forgive where he might have admired.  
Yet whenever it slips away free and unlaced,  
It runs like a stream with a musical waste,  
And gurgles along with the liquidest sweep :  
'Tis not deep as a river, but who'd have it deep ? . . . .  
He's so innate a cockney, that had he been born  
Where plain bare skin's the only full dress that is worn,

He'd have given his own such an air, that you'd say  
'T had been made by a tailor to lounge in Broadway ;  
His nature's a glass of champagne with the foam on't,  
As tender as Fletcher, as witty as Beaumont ;  
So his best things are done in the flush of the moment.  
If he wait, all is gone ; he may stir it, and shake it,  
But the fixed air once gone, he can never remake it.  
He might be a marvel of easy delightfulness,  
If he would not sometimes leave the *r* out of sprightfulness.  
F. R. Lowell.

Mr. Willis deals with the ornamental rather than the useful. He attends to that which attracts the senses, rather than to that which should occupy the mind. He is not a man of cultivated taste ; but neither is he a man of science, an antiquary, a naturalist, a political economist, or a politician.—*Edinburgh Review*.

## Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

1809-1861.

We consider Miss Barrett to be a woman of undoubted genius and most unusual learning ; but that she has indulged her inclination for themes of sublime mystery, not, certainly, without displaying great power, yet at the expense of that clearness, truth, and proportion which are essential to beauty, and has most unfortunately fallen into the trammels of a school or manner of writing which of all that ever existed—Lycophron, Lucan, and Gongora, not forgotten—is the most open to the charge of being *vitiis imitabile exemplar*.—*Quarterly Review*.

. . . Miss Barrett, whose poetical and critical writings have displayed not only considerable taste, beauty, and feeling, but whose variety and depth of erudition might seem to recal the days when fair pupils studied Plato with Roger Ascham.—*Church of England Quarterly Review*.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning is too dear to me as a friend to be spoken of merely as a poetess. Indeed, such is the influence of her manners, her conversation, her temper, her thousand sweet and attaching qualities, that they who knew her best are apt to lose sight altogether of her learning and of her genius, and to think of her only as the most charming person that they have ever met. But she is known to so few, and the peculiar



characteristics of her writings, their purity, their tenderness, their piety, and their intense feeling of humanity and of womanhood have won for her the love of so many. . . .—*M. R. Mitford.*

## O. W. Holmes.

1809.

Dr. Holmes is a poet of wit and humour and genial sentiment, with a style remarkable for its purity, terseness, and point, and for an exquisite finish and grace. His lyrics ring and sparkle like cataracts of silver, and his serious pieces—as successful in their way as those mirthful frolics of his muse for which he is best known—arrest the attention by touches of the most genuine pathos and tenderness.—*Griswold.*

Many of his pleasant lyrics seem not so much the object of wit as of fancy and sentiment turned in a humorous direction.—*Whipple.*

Long may he live to make broader the face of our care-ridden generation, and to realize for himself the truth of the wise man's declaration, that a merry heart is a continual feast.—*Whittier.*

For him we can find no living prototype ; to track his footsteps we must travel back as far as Pope or Dryden. . . . Lofty, pregnant, graceful, grand, high of thought and clear of word, we could fancy ourselves reading some pungent page of "Absalom and Achitophel." . . . He excels in singing his own charming songs, and speaks as well as he writes.—*M. R. Mitford.*

## Alfred Tennyson.

1809.

Miss Alfred.—*Lord Lytton.*

Out of an age so diversified and as yet so unshapely, he who draws forth any graceful and expressive forms is well entitled to high praise. Turning into fixed beauty any part of the shifting and mingled matter of our time, he does what in itself is very difficult, and affords very valuable help to all future labourers. If he has not given us back our age as a whole transmuted into crystalline clearness and lustre—a work accomplished by a few

only of the greatest minds under the happiest circumstances for their art—yet we scarce know to whom we should be equally grateful as to him who has enriched us with many shapes of lasting loveliness “won from the vague and formless infinite.” Mr. Tennyson has done more of this kind than almost any one that has appeared amongst us during the last twenty years. And in such a task of alchemy a really successful experiment, even on a small scale, is of great worth compared with the thousands of fruitless efforts or pretences on the largest plan, which are daily clamouring for all men’s admiration of their nothingness.—*Quarterly Review*, 1843.

Tennyson cannot fail to be admired ; but his admirers have confounded overcarefulness with perfection, and have assigned him a rank among our greatest poets which we are convinced he will not permanently retain.—*Ibid.* 1868.

I have read Tennyson’s “In Memoriam,” or rather part of it ; I closed the book when I had got about halfway. It is beautiful ; it is mournful ; it is monotonous. Many of the feelings expressed bear in their utterance the stamp of truth ; yet if Arthur Hallam had been somewhat nearer Alfred Tennyson—his brother instead of his friend—I should have distrusted this rhymed and measured and printed monument of grief. What change the lapse of years may work I do not know ; but it seems to me that bitter sorrow, while recent, does not flow out in verse !—*Charlotte Brontë*.

He is indolent, over-refining, is in danger of neutralizing his earnestness altogether by the scepticism of thought, not too strong, but not strong enough to lead or combine, and he runs or rather reposes altogether upon feelings (not to speak it offensively) too sensual. His mind lives in an atmosphere heavy with perfumes. He grows lazy by the side of his Lincolnshire water-lilies ; and, with a genius of his own sufficient for original and enduring purposes (at least we hope so) subjects himself to the charge of helping it too much with the poets gone before him, from Homer to Wordsworth and to Shelley and Keats.—*Church of England Quarterly Review*.

His ideality is both adornative and creative, although up to this period it is ostensibly rather the former than the latter. His ideal faculty is either satisfied with an exquisitely delicate

compost. It wont stick ; unseemly cracks deform the surface ; it falls off piece by piece ere it has dried in the sun, or it hardens into blotches ; and the worshippers have but discoloured and disfigured their idol. The worst of it is, that they make the Bespattered not only feel, but look ridiculous ; he seems as absurd as an image in a tea-garden ; and, bedizened with faded and fantastic garlands, the public cough on being told he is a Poet, for he has much more the appearance of a Post.—*Blackwood's Magazine*, 1832.

Mr. Tennyson belongs decidedly to the class we have described as the poets of sensation.—*A. Hallam*.

I have good hopes of Alfred Tennyson ; but the cockneys are doing what they may to spoil him—and, if he suffers them to put their bird-lime on his feet, he will stick all the days of his life on hedge-rows or leap fluttering about the bushes. I should be sorry for it, for though his wings are far from being full-fledged, they promise now well in the pinions, and I should not be surprised to see him yet a sky-soarer. His "Golden Days of Good Haroun Alraschid" is extremely beautiful. There is feeling and fancy in his "Oriana." He has a fine ear for melody and harmony too, and rare and rich glimpses of imagination. He has—*genius*. TICKLER : Affectations. C. NORTH : Too many. But I admire Alfred, and hope—nay trust—that one day he will prove himself a poet. If he do not—then I am no prophet.—"*Noctes Ambrosianæ*."

## W. M. Thackeray.

1811-1863.

Thackeray is a Titan of mind. His presence and powers impress one deeply in an intellectual sense.—*Charlotte Brontë*.

There is a man in our own days whose words are not framed to tickle delicate ears ; who, to my thinking, comes before the great ones of society much as the son of Imlah came before the throned Kings of Judah and Israel, and who speaks truth as deep, with a power as prophet-like and vital—a mien as dauntless and as daring.—*Ibid*.

Thackeray was without Scott's feudal sympathies, and had far less romance and historical feeling ; neither was his imagination so various as Scott's—which created such diverse characters as Rebecca and Jeanie Deans—nor his vein of poetry so

rich. In one point the late writer had an advantage : he wrote a better style. The prose of Scott is cumbrous and apt to be verbose ; whereas Thackeray's English is one of his greatest merits. It is pure, clear, simple in its power, and harmonious ; clean, sinewy, fine, and yet strong, like the legs of a racehorse.  
—*James Hannay.*

He kept his Show-Box, with no Mirrors where  
You saw Eternity, whose worlds we pass  
Darkly by daylight, but with many a glass  
Reflecting all the humours of the Fair.  
The thousand shapes of vanity and sin ;  
Toy-stalls of Satan ; the mad masquerade ;  
The floating pleasures that before them played :  
The foolish faces following, all a-grin.  
He slily prick'd the bubbles that we blew.

*Anon., in Good Words.*

He began his career as a painter, but soon abandoned that pursuit for literature. He illustrated some of his early works. He has travelled much, and is a good linguist. Few persons who entertain the ordinary opinions that are held concerning humorists would imagine the sterling qualities of solid mirth and faithfulness in friendship that belong to Mr. Thackeray. With strangers reserved and uncommunicative, to those who know him he is open-hearted, kindly disposed, and generous. To great sensibility and an innate love of all that is good and noble, he unites sentiments of profound hate and contempt for falsehood, meanness, worldliness, and hypocrisy, and a rare power of satirizing it and exposing it.—*Dr. Madden, 1855.*

He never exhausts, elaborates, or insists too much upon anything ; he drops his finest remarks and happiest illustrations as Buckingham dropped his pearls, and leaves them to be picked up and appreciated as chance may bring a discriminating observer to the spot. His effects are uniformly the effects of sound wholesome legitimate art ; and we need hardly add that we are never harrowed up with physical horrors of the Eugene Sue school in his writings, or that there are no melodramatic villains to be found in them. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin, and here are touches of nature by the dozen. His pathos (though not so deep as Mr. Dickens') is exquisite ; the more so, perhaps, because he seems to struggle against it, and to be half ashamed of being

caught in the melting mood ; but the attempt to be caustic, satirical, ironical, or philosophical, on such occasions, is uniformly vain ; and again and again have we found reason to admire how an originally fine and kind nature remains essentially free from worldliness, and, in the highest pride of intellect, pays homage to the heart.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1848.

The only faculty with which he gifts his good women is a supreme faculty of tears.—*Alex. Smith*.

If, in the reckless vivacity of his youth, his satirical pen had ever gone astray or done amiss, he had caused it to prefer its own petition for forgiveness long before—

“ I’ve writ the foolish fancies of his brain ;  
The aimless jest that, striking, hath caused pain ;  
The idle word that he’d wish back again.”

In no pages should I take it upon myself at this time to discourse of his books, of his refined knowledge of character, of his subtle acquaintance with the weaknesses of human nature, of his delightful playfulness as an essayist, of his quaint and touching ballads, of his mastery over the English language : least of all in these pages, enriched by his brilliant qualities from the first of the series, and beforehand accepted by the public through the strength of his great name.—*Charles Dickens*.<sup>1</sup>

The fine grey head, the dear face with its gentle smile, the sweet, manly voice which we knew so well, with its few words of kindest greeting ; the gait and manner and personal presence of him whom it so delighted us to encounter in our casual comings and goings about the town—it is of these things, and of these things lost for ever, that we are now thinking. We think of them as treasures which are not only lost, but which can never be replaced. He who knew Thackeray will have a vacancy in his heart’s inmost casket, which must remain vacant till he dies. One loved him almost as one loves a woman, tenderly and with thoughtfulness—thinking of him when away from him as a source of joy that cannot be analyzed, but is full of comfort.—*Anthony Trollope*.

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Cornhill Magazine*, at the time of Mr. Thackeray’s death.—**ED.**

## Edgar Allan Poe.

1811-1849.

With me poetry has been not a purpose but a passion.—*Poe*.  
A winning, sad-mannered gentleman.—*N. P. Willis*.

He is perfectly poetic in his own province. If his circle is a narrow, it is a magic one. His poetry is sheer poetry, and borrows nothing from without, as didactic poetry does.—*James Hannay*.

You want flowers and fruit for your altar; and wherever Poe's music has passed, flowers and fruit are fairer and brighter.—*Ibid.*

Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge :  
Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,  
In a way to make people of common sense damn metres ;  
Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,  
But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind.  
*Lowell.*

He was a blackguard of undeniable mark. Yet his chance of success at the onset of life was great and manifold. Nature was bountiful to him, bestowing upon him a pleasing person and excellent talents. Fortune favoured him; education and society expanded and polished his intellect, and improved his manner into an insinuating and almost irresistible address. Upon these foundations he took his stand, became early very popular among his associates, and might have erected a laudable reputation had he possessed ordinary prudence. But he defied his good genius. There was a perpetual strife between him and virtue, in which virtue was never triumphant. His moral stamen was weak, and demanded resolute treatment; but instead of seeking a bracing and healthy atmosphere, he preferred the impurer airs, and gave way readily to those low and vulgar appetites which infallibly relax and press down the victim to the lowest state of social abasement.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1858.

His was a shrewd and naturally unamiable character.—*Griswold*.

## John Forster.

1812.

I have made the acquaintance of Mr. Forster, and like him exceedingly ; he is very clever, and, what is better, very noble-minded.—*Lady Blessington.*

He is not general in his friendships, but I have known him, in cases where his aid has been required, display a zeal and energy rarely surpassed, or indeed equalled, more especially in cases of literary men or their families when in distress.—*Anon.*

The rarest and most advantageous of all combinations—the union of common sense and great intellectual endowments—constitutes the power and peculiarity of Mr. Forster's abilities alike in literature and journalism. One is reminded, by his lucid, plain, trenchant, and forcible style of writing, of Cobbett's best manner, with a large infusion into it of literary taste and scholarship. . . . A disciple of Lavater, or Gall and Spurzheim, could not encounter Forster in any society, or position in it, without being struck with his appearance—his broad and ample forehead, his massive features, his clear, intelligent eye, his firm, fixed, and solemn look, and expressiveness of lips, and other features. When we are ushered into the presence of Forster we feel at home in his company, and well assured of our safety in it. We find ourselves in the company of a man of high integrity and moral character—of an enlarged mind and of a generous nature.—*Dr. Madden, 1855.*

## Charles Dickens.

1812-1870.

Boz is the fictitious signature of a young man named Dickens, who was for some years engaged as a writer in one of the London newspapers, which he enlivened with his humorous and graphic sketches. We are not aware that he is a native of London, but he has at least, by his residence there, made himself minutely familiar with the peculiarities of the people, chiefly of the middle and lower ranks, which he has the knack of hitting off in a singularly droll and happy

manner. We have never visited London without noticing that it possessed a prodigious fund of character for description, and yet, since the time of Smollett, this inexhaustible fund has lain untouched. The most odd-looking and odd-speaking beings were suffered to vegetate unheeded, unchronicled, except when partially brought into notice by a foreigner—Washington Irving. Upon this mine of character and manners, Boz has successfully struck. He is now busy in the work of excavation. The chief talent of this clever writer consists in close perception, not only of character, but of every minute circumstance and local peculiarity. Nothing escapes his notice, or fails to be made the subject of humorous observation.—*Chambers*.

The vulgarity of his attempts at the aristocracy—his lords and baronets—is woful.—*Quarterly Review*.

We are inclined to predict of works of this style (*i.e.*, the works of Dickens) both in England and France (where the manufacture is flourishing on a very extensive and somewhat profligate scale) that an ephemeral popularity will be followed by early oblivion.—*Ibid*.

If Mr. Dickens's characters were gathered together, they would constitute a town populous enough to send a representative to Parliament. Let us enter. The style of architecture is unparalleled. There is an individuality about the buildings. In some obscure way they remind one of human faces. There are houses sly-looking, houses wicked-looking, houses pompous-looking. Heaven bless us! what a rakish pump! What a self-important town hall! What a hard-hearted prison! The dead walls are covered with advertisements of Mr. Sleary's circus. Newnan Noggs comes shambling along. Mr. and the Misses Pecksniff come sailing down the sunny side of the street. Miss Mercy's parasol is gay; papa's neckcloth is white and terribly starched. Dick Swiveller leans against a wall, his hands in his pockets, a primrose held between his teeth, contemplating the opera of Punch and Judy, which is being conducted under the management of Messrs. Codling and Short. You turn a corner, and you meet the coffin of little Paul Dombey borne along. In the afternoon you hear the rich tones of the organ from Miss La Creevy's first floor, for Tom Pinch has gone to live there now; and as you know all the people as you know your own brothers and sisters, and consequently require no letters of introduction, you go up and talk with the dear old fellow about all his friends and your friends,



and towards evening he takes your arm, and you walk out to see poor Nelly's grave.—*Alexander Smith.*

I am delighted to find how gloriously my friend Dickens has been received at Edinburgh. But the Scotchmen could not avoid ill-placed criticisms and oblique comparisons. One block-head talked of his deficiency in the female character—the very thing in which he and Shakspeare most excel.—*W. S. Landor, 1841.*

When you write to Mr. Dickens, remember us most kindly to him. I have made many persons buy "The Chimes" who were afraid it was not amusing, and made them ashamed of expecting nothing better, nothing greater, from such a writer. They can laugh until their sides ache over Mrs. Gamp, but they dread weeping over dear good Trotty, that personification of goodness; sweet Meg, the beau-ideal of female excellence; poor Lilian, and the touching but stern reality of Bill Fern, which beguiled me of so many tears. We should pity such minds, yet they make us too angry for pity. I have read "The Chimes" a third time, and found it as impossible to repress my tears when perusing the last scene between Meg and Lilian as at the first.—*Lady Blessington, 1845.*

We think him a very original writer—well entitled to his popularity, and not likely to lose it—and the truest and most spirited delineator of English life, amongst the middle and lower classes, since the days of Smollett and Fielding. He has remarkable powers of observation, and great skill in communicating what he has observed—a keen sense of the ludicrous—exuberant humour—and that mastery in the pathetic which, though it seems opposed to the gift of humour, is often found in conjunction with it. Add to these qualities an unaffected style, fluent, easy, spirited, and terse—a good deal of dramatic power, and great truthfulness and ability in description. We know no other English writer to whom he bears a marked resemblance. He sometimes imitates other writers, such as Fielding in his introductions, and Washington Irving in his detached tales, and thus exhibits his skill as a parodist. But his own manner is very distinct, and comparison with any other would not serve to illustrate and describe it. We would compare him rather with the painter Hogarth.—*Edinburgh Review, 1838.*

His immense power of observation, from the humblest to the most important details, his genuine originality of thought and

expression, are among the most striking of his attributes. Warm-hearted, impulsive, and generous, of buoyant spirits, the keenest intelligence, and quickest perception of everything worthy of notice, of the ridiculous as well as of the beautiful ; his independence of spirit, his natural elasticity and constitutional energy of mind, vivacity of manner in conversation, and perfect freedom from all affectation, enhance the value of his other excellent qualities. In him a variety of gifts and graces are combined. In all his domestic relations, as son, husband, father, and brother, his conduct is unexceptionable. His character seems to have some self-sustaining principle in it, in all positions he is placed in. His countenance is, I think, the most varying and expressive I ever saw.—*Quoted by Dr. Madden.*

### Charles Mackay.

1812.

Charles Mackay is the first poet, so far as my knowledge extends, of the new epoch ; the day-star of a brighter day of poetry than the world has yet seen. At the same time I fear that only the initiated—that is, the individuals with high moral organs, more or less cultivated—will understand and feel the divine harmony of his poetry. But his fame will rise and last.—*George Combe.*

Happy is the privilege of genius than can “float down the hungry generations” in a song ; and, so far as I may venture to prophesy, such will be the fortune of Charles Mackay. He speaks emphatically for the people. Not inferior to Tennyson in artistic skill, he possesses some of the pathetic humour of Hood, with a simplicity which sometimes reminds me of Longfellow ; but with a sprightliness, elasticity, and versatility which none of them possess.—*Douglas Ferrol.*<sup>1</sup>

. . . . Glorious ballads are those he has given us. Earnest in purpose, striving, healthy in tone, breathing energy and endurance in every cadence, his poems are true inspirations, spoken by a seer who knows the existing spirit and wants of humanity. And mingled with these sterner notes are the tones

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<sup>1</sup> Of Douglas Jerrold the *Quarterly Review* said : “In the brightest sallies of conversational wit he has no surviving equal.” “He sparkled,” says an admirer, “whenever you touched him, like the sea at night.”—*ED.*

of tenderer passions, and the affluence of natural beauties and harmonies, which teach us that now, as in Paradise of old, love is the help meetest for strength. There is an honesty and purity about his poetry which individualizes it. You see at a glance that he is not one of the pedlars of "virtuous indignation," who would sing the praises of the inquisition, and propose to go back to the *droit de seigneur* if the "dodge" paid better. Hearty and wholesome, marvellously full of pith and pluck, reasonably logical, highly and holily aspiring, Mr. Mackay's visions of the future are at once the dreamings of a true poet, and an enthusiastically honest and earnest, and fearless and uncompromising man.—*Angus B. Reach.*

### Charlotte Brontë.

1816-1855.

Everything written by Currer Bell is remarkable. She can touch nothing without leaving on it the stamp of originality.—*H. Martineau.*

She thought much of her duty, and had loftier and clearer notions of it than most people, and held fast to them with more success. . . . All her life was but labour and pain, and she never threw down the burden for the sake of present pleasure.—*Anon.*

She once told her sisters that they were wrong—even morally wrong—in making their heroines beautiful as a matter of course. They replied that it was impossible to make a heroine interesting on any other terms. Her answer was, "I will prove to you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours." "Hence 'Jane Eyre,'" said she, in telling the anecdote; "but she is not myself any further than that." As the work went on the interest deepened to the writer. When she came to "Thornfield" she could not stop. Being shortsighted to excess, she wrote in little square paper-books, held close to her eyes, and (the first copy) in pencil. On she went writing incessantly for three weeks, by which time she had carried her heroine away from Thornfield, and was herself in a fever, which compelled her to pause.—*Daily News.*

Any one who has studied her writings, whether in print or in her letters; any one who has enjoyed the rare privilege of listening to her talk, must have noticed her singular felicity in

the choice of words. She herself in writing her books was solicitous on this point. One set of words was the truthful mirror of her thoughts ; no others, however apparently identical in meaning, would do.—*Mrs. Gaskell.*

A person who, with great mental powers, combines a total ignorance of the habits of society, a great coarseness of taste, and a heathenish doctrine of religion.—*Quarterly Review*, 1849.

We take Currer Bell to be one of the most remarkable of *female* writers ; and believe it is now scarcely a secret that Currer Bell is the pseudonyme of a woman. An eminent contemporary, indeed, has employed the sharp vivacity of a female pen to prove "upon irresistible evidence" that "*Jane Eyre*" *must be* the work of a man ! But all that "irresistible evidence" is set aside by the simple fact that Currer Bell *is* a woman. We never, for our own parts, had a moment's doubt on the subject. That Jane herself was drawn by a woman's delicate hand, and that Rochester equally betrayed the sex of the artist, was to our minds so obvious, as absolutely to shut our ears to all the evidence which could be adduced by the erudition even of a *marchande de modes* ; and that simply because we knew that there were women profoundly ignorant of the mysteries of the toilette, and the terminology of fashion (independent of the obvious solution, that such ignorance might be counterfeited, to mislead), and felt that there was no man who *could so* have delineated a woman—or *would so* have delineated a man. The fair and ingenious critic was misled by her own acuteness in the perception of details ; and misled also in some other way, and more uncharitably, in concluding that the *author* of "*Jane Eyre*" was a heathen educated among heathens—the *fact* being, that the *authoress* is the daughter of a clergyman ! This question of authorship, which was somewhat hotly debated a little while ago, helped to keep up the excitement about "*Jane Eyre* ;" but, independently of that title to notoriety, it is certain that, for many years, there had been no work of such power, piquancy, and originality. Its very faults were faults on the side of vigour ; and its beauties were all original. The grand secret of its success, however—as of all genuine and lasting success—was its *reality*. From out the depths of a sorrowing experience here was a voice speaking to the experience of thousands. The aspects of external nature, too, were painted with equal fidelity—the long cheerless winter days, chilled with rolling mists occasionally gathering into the strength

of rains—the bright spring mornings—the clear solemn nights—were all painted to your *soul* as well as to your eye, by a pencil dipped into a soul's experience for its colours. Faults enough the book has undoubtedly : faults of conception, faults of taste, faults of ignorance ; but in spite of all, it remains a book of singular fascination. A more masculine book, in the sense of vigour, was never written. Indeed that vigour often amounts to coarseness—and is certainly the very antipode to "lady-like."—*George Henry Lewes, Edinburgh Review, 1850.*<sup>1</sup>

## Emily Brontë.

1819–1848.

"Wuthering Heights" was hewn in a wild workshop, with simple tools, out of homely materials. The statuary found a granite block on a solitary moor ; gazing thereon he saw how from the crag might be elicited a head, savage, swart, sinister ; a form moulded with at least one element of grandeur, power. He wrought with a rude chisel, and from no model but the vision of his meditations. With time and labour the crag took human shape ; and there it stands, colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock ; in the former sense terrible and goblin-like—in the latter almost beautiful, for its colouring is of mellow grey, and moorland moss clothes it ; and heath, with its blooming bells and balmy fragrance, grows faithfully close to the giant's foot.—*Charlotte Brontë.*

It has been said of Shakspeare that he drew cases which the physician might study ; Ellis Bell has done no less.—*S. Dobell.*

No coward soul is mine,  
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere :  
I see heaven's glories shine,  
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

*E. Brontë.*

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lewes, I divine, with all his talents and honesty, must have some faults of manner ; there must be a touch too much of dogmatism ; a dash extra of confidence in him sometimes. This you think while you are reading the book ; but when you have closed it and laid it down, and sat a few minutes collecting your thoughts and settling your impressions, you find the idea or feeling predominant in your mind to be pleasure at the fuller acquaintance you have made with a fine mind and a true heart, with high abilities and manly principles.—*Charlotte Brontë.*

Emily had a head for logic and a capability of argument unusual in a man, and rare indeed in a woman, according to M. Héger. Impairing the force of this gift was a stubborn tenacity of will, which rendered her obtuse to all reasoning where her own wishes or her own sense of right was concerned. "She should have been a man—a great navigator," said M. Héger in speaking of her. "Her powerful reason would have deduced new spheres of discovery from the knowledge of the old; and her strong imperious will would never have been daunted by opposition or difficulty—never have given way but with life." And yet, moreover, her faculty of imagination was such that, if she had written a history, her view of scenes and characters would have been so vivid, and so powerfully expressed, and supported by such a show of argument, that it would have dominated over the reader, whatever might have been his previous opinions or his cooler perceptions of its truth. But she appeared egotistical and selfish compared to Charlotte.—*Mrs. Gaskell, "Life of Charlotte Brontë."*<sup>1</sup>

### James Russell Lowell.

1819.

Lowell unites in his most effective power the dreamy, suggestive character of the transcendental bard with the philosophic simplicity of Wordsworth.—*H. T. Tuckerman.*

He is the Hudibras of America.—*Bungay's "Off-hand Takings."*

The successive publications of Mr. Lowell show a marked progress, and encourage us to hope for a ripe harvest when the soil shall be cultivated to the utmost and the fruit has been allowed to reach its full maturity. The swift movement of Mr. Lowell's verses and the daring energy of his conceptions show that his genius inclines to the lyric form of poetry.—*A. R. Scoble.*

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<sup>1</sup> To Emily Brontë's genius justice seems hardly to have been done. Her sister, indeed, recognised, and may be said to have adored it. Emily Brontë's mind was at once dark and luminous, like the eyes of an Indian. Her qualities were each and all splendid, but too massive and masculine for her frail frame, worn and worried by consumption. "Wuthering Heights" is a noble work. Frequent passages haunt one like scenes from "Macbeth" or the "Cenci." In some points her genius seems superior to her sister's.—*Ed.*

## John Ruskin.

1819.

Mr. Ruskin seems to me one of the few genuine writers, as distinguished from bookmakers, of this age. His earnestness even amuses me in certain passages ; for I cannot help laughing to think how utilitarians will fume and fret over his deep, serious (and as *they* will think) fanatical reverence for Art. That pure and severe mind you ascribed to him speaks in every line. He writes like a consecrated Priest of the Abstract and Ideal.  
—*Charlotte Brontë.*

I think it must be admitted by all unprejudiced minds that Mr. Ruskin's criticism on the theory of Sir Joshua's—which makes the essential characteristic of the grand style to be the avoidance of temporary and local circumstances and precise details—is sound and searching, and that his own definition of the grand style is as much superior to that of Sir Joshua in comprehensiveness and sound philosophy as it is in the eloquence of its expression.—*C. R. Leslie.*

After having made a fame by hanging to the skirts of a famous artist—after deluding those cravings for honesty into the belief that a dashing style must imply precious discoveries—after having met the humour of the time, by preaching the religion of architecture with a freedom in the use of sacred names and things from which a more reverential man would have shrunk—after having served as an eloquent though too flattering guide to the treasures of Venice—after having enriched the citizens of this Scottish metropolis with receipts how to amend the architecture of our city by patching Palladian squares, streets, and crescents with Gothic windows, balconies, and pinnacles—after having lectured to decorators on the beauty and virtue of painting illegible letters on signboards and shop-fronts—the wisdom of Mr. Ruskin has of late begun to cry in the streets. He attempts to erect the most extravagant paradoxes into new canons of taste ; and the virulence of his personalities is only exceeded by the eccentricity of his judgment.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1856.

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